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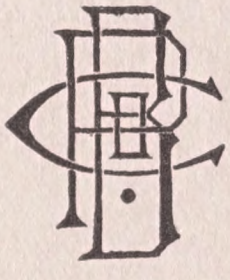
TEARS & SMILES

STORIES

By

A. H. PROPPÈR



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Tears and Smiles.

THE GENTILE.

The boardinghouse was a recent conversion from the magnificent home of the ex mayor, whose modesty had been so shocked when a new school building had been named for him by the grateful citizens of the Southern metropolis, that he went to Boston to live, where the zephyrs from the directions of the Charles River and the Bay would have occasion to cool off his blushes.

A gentleman called in answer to an advertisement. He was shown to the parlor to-let, and told that it was the sanctum of many a page in the annals. To avoid his misclassifying of the place as an historical point he was shown to a spot in the library where stood Grover, made of bamboo and rattan, and named after a then President, under whose weight it has broken down for the first time, and held sacred ever after.

It may be needless to state that both the floor and the chair were at this time in good repair.

The parlor was elegant and immaculate, the same as when Colonel Bryan was received there during his candidacies, when he developed his new profession of lecturer, which he now pur-

sues as a means of amassing fortunes. Every piece of furniture and bric a brac was still in the place where the late mayor left it, even to the marble statue of the Fountain of Love, with the pretty semi-nude virgin upon the pedestal, catching the bounty of the fountain in a cockle held high in a dimpling hand with a broken forefinger. Just two pieces have been added to the original garniture, the folding bed and the piano.

"We have the finest boarders in town," said Miss Miriam, "everyone can tell you that. We are known by the swellest folks. We belong to the smart set. We do not have to keep boarders, we just like to do it. You are a fine gentleman, and we will let you have this, the best room in the house. You are single, are you not?"

"Yes."

"Good. We don't want no married folks in here. We don't like lady boarders nohow. They are too much bother."

"Too bad."

"Yes, they're never satisfied. They always talk behind your back, and to your face they always repeat things others say behind you. Then again, they are jealous of you, and they always keep you in hot water."

"Shocking."

"Yes, it is. Here we have a Mrs. Lowenheim. Her husband was brought home dead from Louisville, where he committed suicide. He was a traveling man, in the whiskey business. He had been treasurer for the Elk lodge; but his folks paid all his debts after he died——"

"Yes?"

"Yes, and he just died ten days ago, and she had already forgotten him, except when she is blue, when she cries like a spanked kid. She backbites everybody, even now, when she ought to have on her weeds and be sanctimonious."

"What will you charge for this room and board?"

"The gentleman who just vacated it paid $90 a month—that is—that is how much he would have paid, but—eh—he forgot to pay or something—he owes it to my mother. Everybody takes advantage of my foolish mother. Here we have a Mrs. Bauck. Her husband is a floor walker in a department store. Her boy is seven years old, and my brother, Cyrill, is three; and that big boy—she allows him and encourages him to beat my baby brother. She thinks it is fun to watch him doing it. It nearly kills my mother, and yet she would not say a word to her. She is just so good, and——"

"Who is the landlady, Miss?"

"Why, I am, of course."

"You are quite young for all these responsibilities."

"Well, I am nineteen. I have a sister seventeen, and my little brother. I am the one that does the business. My mother leaves it all to me. My father just died a year ago. We used to keep a grocery. Formerly we had a saloon. Say, that is bad business! We lived on the floor above the saloon. On Sundays bums would come and want to buy whiskey. We would not let them have it. Then they would get mad and get us arrested for keeping open on Sundays. Just be-

fore my pappa died, he was in bed; he had the locomotive ataxia—he was sued and fined $100—for nothing. Those bums, if you don't cater to them, would swear to anything."

"Your father died," repeated the stranger, pensively.

"Yes, of the locomotive——"

"That is a bad motive."

"I know. Mrs. Bauck has it too. She is a funny dried up little woman. and when she gets mad her feet wiggle like two shaky sticks. She is so funny——"

"Do you really mean that you would charge one ninety dollars for that room and board?"

"Well, you see, that is the best room. We have a big rent to pay—$125 a month."

"How many rooms have you in the house?"

"About twenty, I should think."

"And how is your board?"

"I know you will like it."

"Show me some other room, will you?"

"Miriam, Miriam," called a feminine voice from the rear, "you are wanted at the 'phone."

"All right, Fannie, you show the gentleman through the house."

The younger sister relieved Miss Miriam, and showed the prospector through the second floor.

"What is the price of this one?"

"Thirty five a month, with board."

"Quite a difference between this and the parlor."

"Well, you see, we pay a big rent, ninety dollars a month, and the parlor, being the best room, ought to bring ten dollars more than this."

"How much is that you charge for the parlor?"

"Forty five a month."

"With whom should the arrangements be made, yourself or your sister."

"Either me or my mother. Sister has nothing to do with the business end of it. Of course, she helps around the house."

The caller began to wonder whether it was really a boarding house or a sanitarium. Indeed he began to doubt his own mental balance.

"May I see your mother? I should much rather make my arrangements with her."

"Sure. Mamma, Mamma," she called, "come upstairs."

"I'll come up in a minute."

And she did. She was a pretty little lady, dark complexioned and of Semitic type, rather young looking for a mother of two grown daughters.

The landlady sat upon the bed. So did Miss Fannie, and the stranger.

"I thought I'd speak to *you*. I prefer to transact business with the mother——"

"Sure," she approved, "these kids don't know nothin' about business. They are just kids."

Fannie began to snicker. "No I ain't either. Did not I use to go to Market every morning when we used to keep grocery?" still giggling.

"You did," assented the mother, "but you are a kid just the same."

"I ain't either."

The landlady explained that she had never been in this business before, although several of her sisters have made successes in the boarding

house line; that she was left a widow, and tried to do some respectable work, in order not to waste the estate left by her husband.

Referring to the parlor, she said that there had been a man and wife in it, who paid $50 a month for their room and board, but that she did not like them and asked them to vacate; and that she would prefer a single gentleman, who would pay $35 a month for his accommodations.

"But that is very cheap, madam."

"I want people to be satisfied. If I could get enough nice men to fill up the house at that price, I would be satisfied."

"I'll take it. Gentry is my name."

"I am Mrs. Eppstein, Mr. Gentile. What a funny name you got. We have very fine people in the house, Dr. Blumenstock, Mrs. Reidelsheimer, an insurance lady, Mr. Raphael, a pawnbroker, Mr. Heimlich, a retired horse dealer, Mr. Hermann, a clothinger, Mr. Rosenbaum, a traveling man, Mr. Weinstein, a shoe salesman, and lots of other fine people, who do not live here, but just come in for their meals. This is my daughter, Miss Fannie Eppstein, Mr. Gentile."

Courtesies by the young lady and the gentleman.

Mrs. Eppstein set a fine table. The newcomer was called Mr. Gentile, and when absent he was referred to as the *gentile*. Nor did he care to stop and correct the misunderstanding of his name. It amused him.

The dinner bell rang. News had gone through the house that there was a new boarder, a gentile.

Everyone was introduced at the dinner table,

either by the landlady or by her daughters or by the boarders, as strangers would meet, to the occupant of the room with the statue of the Fountain of Love, in the old accepted form:

"Mr. Blumenstock, this is Mr. Gentile. Mr. Gentile, this is Mr. Blumenstock."

"Mr. Goldberger, this is Mr. Gentile. Mr. Gentile, this is Mr. Goldberger."

"Mr. Weinstein, let me present to you Mr. Gentile. Mr. Gentile, Mr. Weinstein."

"Mr. Goldman, I have the pleasure of introducing to you Mr. Gentile. Mr. Gentile, this is Mr. Goldman."

"My cousin, Miss Fightman, Mr. Gentile. Cousin, this is Mr. Gentile."

"This is Miss Kohn, a typewritist, Mr. Gentile. Miss Kohn, this is Mr. Gentile."

"This is Mr. Gentile, Mrs. Wiseman. Mr. Gentile, this is Mrs. Wiseman."

And so forth.

At the table Mr. Goldblatt related that he had an uncle in Chicago who was worth a lot of money, and that he obtained some more, with his new wife. He also said that he had sold two violins that cost him $3.25 apiece wholesale, at eighteen dollars apiece, to two friends of his, that day. He mentioned several other deals, including that he bought a bargain from a negro, a watch worth $40, for $6.25.

Mr. Firestein, being in the same line of business, and somewhat envious of Goldblatt's ingenuity as a business man, expressed his doubts as to the verity of the statements. The latter began to splutter with rage. A conflict was

averted by the diplomacy of Mr. Marx, who laughed it off, saying that Mr. Firestein was such a wag, and liked so much to tease people, that if they did not know him they would actually get mad.

The irritated Mr. Goldblatt was so bloated with fury, and yet so much too proud to show it, that he smirked with the outer coat of his puffing cheeks, while from under the muscles a volcano of anger struggled for recognition.

Mrs. Einstein said that she had sold fourteen hats that morning at Hartenstein's, and that she was going to ask for a raise next Saturday. She said her customers just loved her, that she was a drawing card to a millinery department, because she knows just what a woman wants the moment she looks at her, and that if she would not get the raise, she would go back to Reich's, where she had worked for seven years before she married her first husband.

Miss Altman wished she had a glass of beer, said she loved beer, and could not see how anyone could live without it.

Mr. Silverstein told her he would take her out some evening and treat her to a glass. She assured him that would be lovely.

Mr. Goodman had a good laugh on a countryman. The customer asked for a suit of clothes. The best Goodman had were $8.50 suits. The customer tried on a number of them, but he did not like any. The merchant was worried. He was anxious to make a sale. Mentally he quoted poker philosophy, "It is not holding a good hand, but playing a poor hand well." The tiller of the

soil did not like the quality. In vain did Goodman tell him that the regular price of the article was $14, and that it was only reduced because of having too many of them in stock. The customer was just about to go.

"At last," continued Goodman, "I asked him if he would go as high as $15. The farmer said he would, for a fine garment. So I took out one of the many suits he already had tried on, from a pile, and sold him for $15 what he at first would not take for $8.50."

"That happens among swell customers," remarked Mr. Newman, who conducted a merchant tailoring establishment. "I often have to play that trick on some of the most prominent people. They like the pattern of a $20 suit, but the price is too cheap for them, so we sell the same thing from another pile at $40. If that were not the art, there would be nothing to salesmanship. The man has the money to spend, and the salesman who will not make him spend it in *his* store is not worth the space he occupies."

"No wonder they have it in for the whole race," interjected Mr. Mannheimer, "if so much cheating is being done by Jews."

"Jews nothing," answered Mr. Lebowitz, the traveling salesman, angrily, "everybody does it. It is business. There are fools who will not do any business unless you fool them just like that. A man pays a big rent, electric light, help, taxes, takes care of a family, and would be apt to lose a customer who refuses to do business with him unless he fooled him. Such people ought to be soaked. Gentiles soak them too.

"Indeed they do," said Miss Barnette, the modiste, "I did more cheating where I worked in Indianapolis than since I work for Jews, and received just half as much wages. I am willing to go to church with my fellow Christians, but as for work, a job in a Jew store for mine."

"Gee whizz," exclaimed Mrs. McKenna, the widow of a real estate man, "you worruk another few years for them Sheeneys, and you'll be one yersilf. Oi think you are a traitor to jabber like that."

"Well, it is true," said the modiste.

"Look here, madam," said Mr. Lawrence, a reporter, "there is a fellow named Johnamaker in Philadelphia, who makes large profits on his goods, gives thousands of dollars to the Church, and pays smaller wages than any other store, large or small, there. The money he gives to the church advertises his business, and that is why he does it. All the big stores take goods back and no questions are asked if customers are dissatisfied, and moneys are returned. Johnamaker does that too, but only nominally. No man ever got a cent back from his store without losing ten dollars' worth of time, and then, in many cases people drop the subject, because they tire running to his store, and lose both returned goods and money. This man is not a Jew. Look at the political scandals he is continuously involved in, and because he is rich, they cannot hurt him. Even the newspapers of his city are gagged as against him, because he is their biggest advertiser. Look at the state capitol graft game in Penn-

sylvania, not a Jew in it, and many thieves who teach Bible classes at home. Look at Rocker——"

"Shtop, Mr. La'rins. I undershtand you are the son of a preacher."

"Yes, and proud of it."

"An' is that the wa' to talk about Christian inshtithushons?"

"No, just about men who use the church as a license for fraud."

"I don't like to butt in," said Mr. Gazelle, "but this is on the level. I saw last year before Christmas, shaving brushes sold in Marshal Yield's retail store in Chicago at $3 apiece. They cost $5.10 a dozen wholesale. Elsewhere they retailed at 75c apiece. I am in the business, and I ought to know. I don't champion anyone, but this is on the square——"

"They ought to pay more before Christmas," argued Mrs. KcKenna.

"And why," retorted Miss Barnette, "because the customers think that if it is marked $3 in a fine store it must be a better grade, and because Christmas is a Christian institution, when people are prone to be *easy,* you think millionaire business men ought to take advantage of it. Take the case of the clergy and the church——"

"Shthop right there," ordered Mrs. McKenna, "you are an A. P. A., and you know it, and you must not thry to desicrate the church——"

"Ladies," interrupted Miss Fannie.

"What is it, me darlint. I know ye. You don't want us to argye, do you. Bliss the very soul of ye."

"I'll tell you what kind of a girl I am," volun-

teered Mrs. Lowenheim, laying down her fork to enable her hands to arrange her disheveled pompadour, "I am funny, but if I like a person I like them no matter what they are, until they get to backbiting me. I once had a friend, oh my, how much I did for that girl, and I never said an unkind word of her. I never speak ill of anyone, even of my enemies. Her name was Tilly—Tilly Steinberger—; and she told so many lies about me. I was so good to her. When my husband was living, we took her out to Glendale Park once. She was nothing but a shop girl; and I thought she was a perfect lady. But I found her out all right. Why, she is the meanest thing I ever saw, and lie? Oh my! She was so deceitful. I would have done anything for her. In fact I feel kindly toward her now. But she is the meanest, most deceitful creature. I got her the job she has had for so many years and is still holding. I used to work in the same store, in the underwear department, from the time I was twelve years old until I married. The next chance I will have, I'll see Mr. Kahn. I'll put a bug in his ear. I will have her discharged if it is the last act of my life. That mean female—I could kill that serpent, that she cat, I will——"

"An' she is a perfect lady," contradicted Mrs. McKenna, "if she *is* a crucifyer. Oi've known her longer an' better than you have."

"I'll tell you what I wish I had," spurted Mr. Wiseburg, who has not been heard from in some time, "I wish I had fifty million dollars."

"Is that all?" asked the gentile, with a yawn, "what would you do?"

"Nothing."

"I could get a few thousand dollars. A marriage broker wants me to marry a widow. She has a fine store, too," put in Mr. Adelman, the retail merchant; "he just begs me to enter the agreement. But I prefer to wait, I am not so old yet."

"She must need one badly," added Mrs. Mandelbaum, an elderly lady.

"You think no one is as good as your son, don't you," protested the embarrassed Adelman.

"Certainly *you* are not, and what is more, I would rather kill my Leopold than see him ask a marriage broker to do his courting and arrange his ante-nuptial affairs."

"Well, I won't say no more," grunted the humiliated candidate, as he left the table.

"I lost ten cents somewhere," complained the landlady. "I mislaid a dime."

Everyone had said something, except Maxmilian Bever. He was the most despised in the house. He has not been as long in America as the rest. He was a workingman, engaged in a shoe factory. He was one of the recent victims of Jewish persecution in Roumania, and because he was more foreign than the rest, they regarded him as a sort of parasite upon *their* country.

II.

After the dining room was vacated Gentry took a rocker on the porch, in a corner whence he could see in either of the four directions in which the crossing streets ran. There he was shaded by

the morning glories and the magnolia, and watched the sunbeams struggling through the vines and the leaves onto the wall; anon he skimmed over some periodicals and made notations in his vade mecum, and pondered over the variety of the classes of humanity he had met, making mental comparisons as it were, when the landlady seated herself within a few feet of him.

"They have some elevating topics—very inspiring indeed—at the table. Is it that way at every meal?"

"I don't understand some of your words. 'Elevating,' 'inspiring,' 'topics'—I don't know what they mean," said the landlady, who had spent her childhood abroad, and had lacked some chances in life.

"I mean, they talk some fine things at the table."

"What do you care. Let them talk. Talk is cheap."

"You must enjoy the company of your boarders."

"I'll tell you how boarders are. Each one tries to show off how smart they are. I don't pay any attention to them—let them talk. It is funny, and they do no harm."

"That is a good way to take it."

"Well, what can I do? I cannot stop them. I have troubles of my own."

"Troubles?"

"Troubles indeed. There is Mrs. Lowenheim. She tells everybody that my board is no good, and why don't she move away? I don't want her. She is—what they call—jealous. You know, she

wants to be my partner. I don't want any partner, and I told her that she is welcome to buy me out. I spent a lot of money buying everything except the ground and the building, and then I improved a few things. I told her she could get the place if she bought my things and my lease; that I was willing to sell out, but would have no partner. Well, she don't want to do that. Now she always talks behind my back, thinking she would ruin my business, get me out, and then *she* would rent the place."

"You mean the little woman, whose husband committed suicide a few days ago?"

"Yes, yes; the one that said at the table what kind a girl she was. Fine girl!"

The little landlady started to laugh, and chuckled and giggled till she could not stop. "She got a boy, thirteen years old; he is bigger than his mother. Her sister lives here too, have you seen her? The sister says she hates men. She never was married. She is forty-seven years old. They all make that excuse for not having been married. They all hate them—because they don't come—"

"You are an observer, are not you?"

"No, I am a widow."

The poor little woman had a fine sense of humor. Too bad she could not understand the language better.

At supper the gentile was not on time. Goldstein wondered what his occupation was. Newman wondered whether he was married. Goldblatt wondered why, of all the boarding houses in the city, the gentile selected that place. The

gentile was tall, the gentile was athletic, the gentile was mysterious. The gentile did not partake in many discussions. The gentile did not brag. He did not flash three karat diamonds and yellow oxchains. He did not rise early. He came and went at irregular hours. He never talked business. He never talked money. He was fonder of children than of other company. All these anomalies had been laboriously discussed when he entered and took his place.

"What is your occupation?" asked Raphael, after long and careful meditation.

"I mind my business," was the answer.

"Stung!" exclaimed one of the boarders, triumphantly, amid the merry roars of the others at the table.

The usually hilarious pawnbroker was much mortified, and the dazzling of the half dozen diamonds which he continuously displayed did not have the power to outshine his humiliation.

One morning all the bathrooms on the upper floors were locked. There were several married women in the house. All wanted the exclusive use of lavatories, and they conspired to have keys made secretly all at once, and carry their demands into execution. The men traveled up and down the stairs in their pajamas, howling at the landlady, who did not know what it was all about.

It was a strike, started by the widow.

The gentile offered his bathroom and room to accommodate all who wished it.

Such a scrambling for the lavatory! A half dozen entered at once. Mr. Hermann hung his clothes on the telephone transmitter. Mr. Gold-

blatt threw his things on the desk. Mr. Pulsky flung his on the gas jet. Mr. Dunkelman suspended his unmentionables upon the dainty hand of the lady of the Fountain of Love, and in a few minutes the palatial bachelor's room was rendered like unto a dressing room on the seashore.

At supper, among other dishes, ham was served. The gentile did not eat anything that came from the pig. Everyone else did, except Maxmilian Bever, the Roumanian.

"We reformed Jews eat pork," remarked Goldstein, eating voraciously.

"It is kind of you," said the gentile, indifferently.

"Reformed!" repeated Bever, whose voice had not been heard for a long time, "What do you call reformed?"

"Reformed Jews are such as do not live up to the laws of Moses."

"Then they are not Jews."

"Well, what are they then?"

"Nothing."

"Nothing, sir?"

"Nothing. They are not Christians, because they do not believe in the divinity of Christ. They are not Jews, because they pollute with pork the race which has not touched unclean food, knowingly, for thousands of years."

"Then you mean that you are a Jew and we are nothing?" protested Altman.

"I do not know what you are. I know what I am. I have been taught that no one is a Jew who eats pork. That teaching is part of my religion and I believe it. I know many Christians who

would not eat pork. They say Jesus never touched pork. It is said, too, that pork is very rich food and provokes appetites for strong and abnormal antidoes, such as spirituous drinks——"

"Would eating pork alone pollute one?" asked Mr. Newman.

"Maybe not, but the breaking of the law would. The whole code of Moses consists of six hundred and thirteen laws. Before a Jewish boy is confirmed, he has to memorize the whole code, and pass the examination in open temple. Ten laws in that code are the ten commandments, and we have no more right to violate any of the other laws than we have to violate one of the commandments. One of those laws is against pork. The right of breaching one law licenses the breach of another. A good Jew will observe all the precepts as they existed at the destruction of Jerusalem; and, if ever the Jews will have a country of their own, their parliament will have the right to change their laws, but not individuals, who wish to ignore such laws as conflict with their appetites."

Everyone at the table was amazed. They did not think there was this much in the Roumanian.

"Then you think we are criminals?" asked Mannheimer.

"If you will read the Bible, you will find the answer. The Jews lost their country, and therewith their police power. Nothing is a crime, unless it is punishable by men. Men will not punish you in America for eating pork, working and doing business seven nights and days a week,

and doing many other things against the Jewish law."

"But the rabbi of the Temple eats pork, and smokes cigars on Saturday."

"He must be the kind of rabbi as you are a Jew."

"Are we not good enough for you?" shouted the impatient Mr. Silverstein, with a thud of his fist upon the table. "We are doing big business and have plenty money, and you are nothing but a shophand. You still smell from the steerage. You want to teach us something?"

"Come, come," said the gentile. "There is a misundertsanding here. Mr. Bever only speaks law as it is written, scientifically. He is right——"

"Right!" exclaimed Lebowitz, sarcastically. "A scientist! He is right! Look at the scientist! Behold the great exponent of science!"

The chorus laughed in derision at the caustic words of Lebowitz. The gentile was anxious to restore order.

"Gentlemen—the ladies are not in this—, is there one among you who can read Hebrew?"

No answer.

"Not one of you?" repeated the gentile.

"I can," whispered Bever, "and I can read and write and speak Yiddish."

"Well, I was born in this country," chimed Mrs. Lowenheim, "where they do not teach such foolishness."

Bever and the gentile smiled furtively.

"The fact is," said the gentile, "that the pure food law, which Uncle Sam is trying to unriddle

now, has been solved by Moses, and all our so-called progress in that regard will not do half the good that a regress toward the time of Moses would."

Everyone listened awfully.

"Every State in the Union has a constitution and thousands of laws. No lawyer knows them all. The chief justice does not know them all; and yet, the ignorance of all of them excuses no one; and one who violates a law the existence of which he never heard of, is apt to be punished just the same as if he had intended to disregard and violate it knowingly. This problem has also been settled by Moses."

"By Moses? How did he settle it?" demanded Mr. Heimlich.

"How?" Why, just as Mr. Bever explained it. Before the confirmation the boy had memorized the 613 statutes, gradually, beginning as early as Christians do to study the Bible. After passing the examination he was confirmed, and told, as part of the ceremony, that henceforth he would be personally responsible for his actions."

"Did you pass that examination, Mr. Bever?" asked Rosenbaum.

"I did, and I have my phylacteries up in my room."

"How does that prove it?"

"They get that," explained the gentile, "upon passing the examination. Do you belong to a shule or synagogue, Mr. Rosenbaum?"

"Noooooh.

"Any of these gentlemen?"

"I don't," was the unanimous reply.

"You do not belong to the Temple, you do not pray Hebrew," continued Bever, much encouraged by the moral support of the stranger, "you do not care about the laws of Moses—maybe you do not observe the holidays. Then how do you know you are Jews?"

"I offer my face in evidence," said Lawyer Finkelstein.

III.

Great was the commotion one evening, when Mr. Raphael was brought in on a stretcher.

A negro had entered his pawnshop and asked for a loan on a brand new suit case. Raphael suspected that it was stolen, took the article from the customer, laid it behind his counter, went to the telephone and called No. 55.

Fifty-five is the police department.

The negro suspected that the pawn-broker called the police, so he bent over, took his suit case and started to run with it, when the pawn-broker caught him.

The negro became mad and butted him up with his skull, then beat him with his fist, and then he bit into his face, his arm, into the fleshy part of his chest, and disabled him and fled.

"What did you want to play policeman for," asked one of the boarders, when the maimed Raphael was able to appear at the table; "if you thought the article was stolen, could not you refuse to do business with the nigger?"

"Well, the detectives expect us to help them catch thieves. I caught a number for them just

like that. I talk with the fellow, monkey around, make out I am busy for a minute, after I give the password to the police, until the coppers come and nab him——"

"Suppose the nigger had killed you?"

"He mighty like to did it. This is a mean business, mine is. We cannot help taking in or buying stolen goods sometimes, not knowing that they were stolen. Then if the police trace the goods, they invariably get us indicted. You know how much chance a Jewish pawn-broker ever has before a jury. Well, if we befriend the police, they overlook little things for us."

"You are dressed pretty warm for such hot weather," said Miss Barnette.

"It's the bandages that make me look so stout. My arms, my whole body, all over—I am so bruised up——"

"Cousin Abe," chimed Mr. Hermann, "you know you always get in trouble with everybody. You talk too much, that is the trouble. I hope this will be a good lesson for you."

Cousin Abe recovered sufficiently to move about and attend to his business. He, like the rest, was extremely jealous of the Roumanian's popularity with the gentile.

The gentile and Bever were absent one evening, and, therefore, they were the topic. "I bet I could find out the gentile's business, if I tried," said Raphael.

"That is easy," said Miss Miriam; "he'll tell it to you if you'll ask him."

"I asked him once."

Everyone laughed.

"There is a time and place for everything. Maybe you asked him at the wrong time and at the wrong place," said the young lady.

More laughter.

"You had better leave the gentile alone," said his cousin, "you have not yet gotten over what the nigger did to you. Maybe the gentile just stays here because he thinks we are a circus and you are the clown."

More laughter.

"What is the gentile writing all the time," asked Rosenbaum, "when you look into his room, he is writing; when you see him on the porch, he is writing; he takes note books with him to the table, and writes while waiting for his——"

"Mrs. Reidelsheimer asked him once," said Raphael, "what he was writing so much for; and he answered 'for a living.' Now, is that any satisfaction?"

"It is satisfaction enough," said Solomonson, "to teach you to mind your business and let him mind his."

Bever entered, and general silence prevailed for a while.

"I wonder if he has a wife," suggested the pawn-broker, breaking the spell of silence.

"I'll ask him," said the widow elect. Just then the subject of the curiosity entered.

"It is so strange," she remarked, with that singsong incidental to her language, "that one who has traveled as much as you have, should not have settled down and married."

"He *is* married," put in Raphael, "I read it in the papers two days ago."

Still no voice from the gentile.

"I suppose it was probably a divorce," continued the pawn-broker. "I do not just remember whether it was a marriage or a divorce I read about you."

The stranger did not waste much time. He had seen meddlers and curious people before. He well knew that they did not even have his name right, and therefore could not recognize it in print if it had appeared.

"Look here, young man," he said, "I hereby notify you that if you ever talk to me again, I shall thrash you."

Silence reigned again until the gentile left the table.

At another meal, when some young ladies were present as guests, and the crowd was unusually large, Mr. Goldstein stopped picking his teeth to speak.

"Mr. Gentile, I should like to get your advice. I did not go to school much. Of course, I can read, write and figure, but that is all. I spent my early life trying to make money. I have succeeded fairly well. I want an education. What would you advise me to do?"

"Go to school."

"I cannot," picking his teeth again and talking with the other half of his mouth. "You see, I have no time. My business demands my attention. I do wish you would tell me what books to get."

"Of course, you know, you must take one book at a time."

"Yes——"

"The one you need the most should be the first."

"Yes—and which should be that; *that's* what I would like to know," still picking his teeth.

"There is a book, written some twenty-five hundred years ago. I don't know whether they sell translations of it or not. The last original I saw was in the library of the late Emperor Ferdinand V., who had adopted it for his court. The original is in the Hebrew language, 'Derech Aeretz' is the title."

"And where could I get it."

"One translation I saw was distributed by a patent medicine concern recently. It was not complete, but it contained about ten pages of good extracts. It is customary in such business to advertise, and as an inducement to get people to keep their folders, they insert a few pages of good literature."

"I'd like to buy that book—Derech Aeretz—," still picking, "if you think it would help me. Of course I could not read the original."

"You should try to get a translation by all means. You need it."

"What does Derech Aeretz mean," asked Goldstein, as the gentile was leaving the dining room.

"Manners."

IV.

These was a church across the street, and the gentile sang in the choir one Sunday. The whole boarding house had gone over to hear him.

"How does that gentile come to know so much

about Jews?" asked Mannheimer. "I wonder if he is not a spy for the Czar."

"I'd ask him if I were you," suggested Lebowitz.

"You ask him, Raphael," asked Mannheimer, "you are better acquainted with him."

"Excuse me."

Mr. Lazarre, the new boarder, said he was a Frenchman. The gentile, who just entered, heard it and spoke French to him. The hotel clerk became embarrassed and pleaded justification and avoidance, saying that he had been ten years in America, was only twenty years old when he left France, and forgot every word he had known, although ten years ago he did not know a word of anything except French.

"I am sorry for you, you need treatment," said the gentile.

"You mean French lessons?" smiled Lazarre.

"No, I mean medical attention, sir. You are diseased. Your condition is abnormal. Yours is the only case of the kind. You are a prodigy."

"I am sorry," smirked Lazarre, wiping the cold perspiration off his brow.

"You understand, Mr. Lazarre," explained Hermann, "this gentleman has a scientific way of calling one a liar."

"He learned it in the book of Derech Aeretz," added Dr. Blumenstock, merrily.

"Mr. Gentile likes to call a spade a spade," corrected the widow.

"Oh, I have such a headache," complained Mrs. McKenna.

"Sorry. I hope we did not cause it," said the

gentile sympathetically, "but it cannot be very serious, you seem to eat heartily."

"Sure an' I've had it for thirty years. It'll be the death of me."

"Have you seen a physician?"

"I have, every wake or so, for twinty years."

"Well, what does he say?"

"'Tis the climate. He gives me medicine and presents the bill iv'ry munth. That's all he does for me."

"Gives you medicine?"

"Yes, sor."

"Will that change the climate for you?"

Dr. Blumenstock laughed.

"No," said Mrs. McKenna, "but it is supposed to cure my throuble."

"Does the doctor know that the climate does not agree with you?"

"Sure an' he does."

"Did he not advise you to go to some other climate?"

"No."

"He just stuffs you with medicine?"

"Yis, sor."

"The scoundrel ought to be in the penitentiary."

Dr. Blumenstock winked understandingly.

"What do you mane, sir," wanted to know Mrs. McKenna.

"You see," explained the doctor, "the gentleman means that your physician ought to try to eliminate the cause of your sickness, and when the cause would be removed, the disease would disappear as of course."

"And you mane that if the climate is the cause —how can the climate be iliminated?"

"*You* can," argued the doctor.

"You want me to be iliminated?"

"No, but you can move to another climate."

"I see," sighed the good soul.

"A person who persists in living in a climate that does not agree with him," opined Lawyer Finkelstein, "is like one who insists on staying at a house where he is not welcome. If he gets a beating it serves him right. Such is your case, if I understand it—is that right, doctor?"

"That is it," expressed the agonized physician, from amid a mouthful of hot potatoes.

"I wish I knew where I lost a dime the other day," interjected the landlady busily. "I lost a dime."

"I see in the papers that Goldberger, the pawnbroker, was again arrested for buying stolen goods," said Mr. Freedman.

"Why is it," queried Miss Barnette, "that people should get into trouble like that?"

"Money, money, cursed money, is the cause," replied Cohen.

"Why is it that the—that they are traders? Why don't they engage in the industries?" suggested Gazelle.

"You see," explained the gentile, "the classes that feel safe are engaged in all the occupations in which other people engage."

"What do you mean by feeling safe?"

"You see, for centuries the Jew was subject to edicts ordering him out of the country, even to leave forthwith. He was not allowed to own real

property. He was not allowed to pursue a trade. He had no country of his own. All the world was owned by some people. It was the policy of Rome to disorganize Israel, and dictated just what should be done to the Jews everywhere. The scattered [illegible] so what could he do? He [illegible] sold it at a profit; bought something again and sold that. Sometimes he would be given rights by governments, then the people would resent it and annoy him, beat him, rob him, kill him.

"When a Jew received short notice to quit the realm, he took with him all he could carry. Anticipating always the probability of persecution, he so managed as not to have a much greater bulk than he could load on his team or on his back and on the backs of his family. Money was the easiest to carry. Money was his best friend and protector. Money often saved him from malicious prosecution. It saved many a life. So he developed a protective tendency to hold on to money."

"But that ain't necessary in this country," suggested Miss Barnette.

"Not only in this country, but everywhere where the Jews were let alone for a few generations, they have so assimilated with the country that it would be hard to separate them. It is only the class that was driven from Roumania to Russia, from Russia to Poland, from Poland to Germany, and then by associated charities shipped to America, that has the traditional tendency of distrust, fear, greed for protection,

money, wealth. But the others are not much different from other people.

"They had had experiences to render them suspicious. They have been granted rights. They have built homes and invested in many enterprises—only to have to abandon them or be imprisoned and starved or killed——."

"My grandfather, a man of 79," put in Bever, somberly, "was killed with an axe. We lived in Kishineff. I saw it with my own eyes. I was six years old. I can see the axe land sideways on the back of his gray head and the blood drivel upon his assailant, who then thrust the blade into the back of his neck, as he lay on the ground. My mother fled for her life. My father was killed in the street. My brother and I were saved by gentile neighbors by hiding us, and at dusk we fled for our lives. I had two little sisters. We were nine children. Then I did not see my mother for five years, when I met her accidentally at the Jewish Charity office in Tolcsva, Hungary. Then we went to Roumania to live. Two of my brothers are still missing; we don't know whether they roam in the world looking for us, or whether they were killed by Russians. My folks had been living in Kishineff for more than a hundred years—and we lost everything. We had a big store; and then we were made beggars."

"*There* is a speaking monument of Jewish history for you," said the gentile.

"My God," cried Mrs. McKenna, drying her eyes with the napkin, "don't say no more."

"It is horrible," sighed Mrs. Bauck.

"Horrible?" sighed Bever with suppressed emotion, "I have seen things done to Jewish girls in the open street by soldiers that are not fit to tell——"

"Please say no more," pleaded Miss Barnette.

"Hereafter I will always be your friend," said the pawn-broker.

"I always did say," said the landlady, "that you have more sense than any of them. You know I am your friend."

"No orthodox friends for mine," thundered Mrs. Lowenheim, the widow, as she left the table, "I was born in this country."

"I hate these kikes," whispered Bauck to Miss Barnette, "I wish you would have nothing to do with them. I am a German Jew, and I have no time for kike stories.

"Kike" is a nickname given by the lower class Jews of one country to the corresponding class of another country.

Bauck was a floorwalker, and Miss Barnette worked under him.

"What is that you are talking at low breath about kikes?" asked Cohen, "if you mean me, I will tell you that I am as good as you are; and if you say it again——"

Bauck left the table.

"Why is it," asked Mr. Gazelle, "That the Jews never work or handle money on Saturdays, and never eat pork or marry gentiles in the old country, whilst when they come here they do? I think they are so disliked there because they are so different and insist on discriminating. If they

were willing to do the things there that they do here, there would not be so much trouble."

"There is no comparison between the two countries," argued Lawyer Finkelstein. "This is a constitutional republic, and Russia is an unlimited monarchy. The local constitution itself speaks for all the people and creeds alike. That gracious provision eliminates rebellious blood, and moulds all into one nation. Publicly no discriminations is shown here. The country is large and resourceful. If all the Jews of the world were to come here, their problem would be solved. The country wants an increase in population, and there are vast uninhabited regions in the West, where all those immigrants could find homes and decent employment, and still not be in the way."

"The fact alone that they are different," said the gentile, "would not cause the trouble, but the lower classes—you know, the Jews have their peasants—cause it. For instance, when such a Jew passes a priest of the avowed enemy's creed he expectorates; he refers to him as a barehead; he calls the enemy's cemetery a carcass lot; he calls the enemy's child a vermin; he calls the enemy an uncircumcised——"

"What do you mean by the lower classes, or peasant Jews?" asked Hermann.

"The class that is rebellious, unreasonable, uneducated, bigoted, whether rich or hungry, is low."

One evening Mrs. Lowenheim sat on the porch with her son on her lap.

"Harry, my darling, my angel, my sweet-

heart, you love your mamma, don't you. Kiss your mamma sweet. That's right. Do it again. That is the way, my honey-bunchy Harry dear. You angel boy. You sweetheart. Ugh—," and she pressed and hugged and kissed the indifferent boy as he sat on her lap, seeming to crush her, his head reaching about a foot higher than hers.

"Love your mamma, sweetness. Hug tight. Tighter. That's the way, my darling boy, Harry; that is the way.

This performance had continued for some time, much to the chagrin of some of the audience.

Mr. Bever winked at the gentile, who smiled in answer, understandingly.

The telephone rang, and the widow went to answer it, and the much relieved Harry ran into the street to play with the other boys, leaving that corner of the porch to the two young men.

"I wonder," said Bever, "if that little woman could milk cows."

Gentry did not understand the connection.

"I wonder if she could make cheese or churn butter."

The other party was still silent.

"My mother never used to kiss me."

It seemed rather pathetic.

"She never called me darling, she never begged me to hug her, she never called me sweetheart. No, she never made any fuss over me. But——"

He became choked with emotion. He reached for his handkerchief to dry his tears.

"But——," he sobbed.

The gentile listened with bated breath.

"But," he reiterated, when he regained his speech, "she was left with a lot of children, chased all over Europe trying to gather us, and when we moved to Roumania she milked the neighbors' cows and made butter and cheese for them, and baked and cooked and scrubbed and washed, to earn her orphans a living. This woman could not and would not do that. Soft talk is cheap, like other talk. All the 'darling' and 'sweetheart' talk will not take the place of what my mother did for us when we lost our property, our home and our father."

V.

The gentile had lived a week in the Nashville house, when a telegram came, calling him to other parts. After he settled with the landlady, at the adieu, he reached for his fountain pen, took a page from his loose leaf notebook, and wrote.

"Madam," said he when he was through, "keep this note."

The little woman looked at the writing, then raised her eyes toward him; but he left, hastening to the station, several of the boarders accompanying him, and Miss Fannie taking a lunch to the train for him in a four pound candy box.

At the terminus Miss Fanny saw a traveling man whom she had met at the park a few days since. The traveler was to leave on the same train, and stood beside the vehicle several cars be-

hind the one of the gentile. The gentile stood near the track, talking with the people who accompanied him, helped carry his grips and to check his trunks. When the signal knelled he lighted his car, and the perplexed Miss Fannie flung the box of fried chicken and boiled eggs and salad and jam and other delicacies at the man with whom she was talking. The confounded traveler is guessing to this day how the young lady, whose name he does not remember, ever came to decide to meet him at the depot with such a fine lunch, and wonders what his wife would say if she ever were to find it out.

The writing which the outgoing boarder gave the landlady was foreign, and in strange characters. She was much agitated over it. No one in the house could make it out. Even Bever admitted that he could not read it, although it looked like Hebrew. He said it was too high for him.

Doctor Atkins, of the church across the street, referred Mrs. Eppstein to Herr Mendelsohn, the reformed rabbi. The rabbi could not make it out. She had shown the thing to many people. No success.

"It's a bluff," said Marx. "He wants you to think he can write Yiddish, but he put his foot in it."

"I should say it was a bluff. Anyone could see that don't mean nothin'," said Goldman.

"It's a shame," said Dr. Blumenstock, "to talk like that. I bet it is a riddle worth going to some expense to solve. Mrs. Eppstein, give it to me. I shall send it to an orthodox rabbi in

New York, or to Jerusalem if necessary. I shall have it translated for you at any cost."

"Thanks, but the gentile told *me* to keep it, and it shall not leave me."

The landlady went to see Rabbi Kaminsky, the orthodox.

"This note, daughter," said the doctor of divinity, "was written by a nobleman."

"A nobleman!"

"Yes, a nobleman; a member of the oldest family of aristocrats, a descendant of Aaron, son of Amram, brother of Moses, high priest of Israel."

"Of Israel!" frowned the landlady with confusion and astonishment.

"Yes, and I envy you for the possession of it. You shall never want for peace as long as you keep it."

"What do I want peace for? I ain't got so much trouble."

"Maybe so, but life is long, and peace is never complete, unless everything else is in harmony."

"Well, what is it?"

"You have been blessed by a descendant of the high priest."

"Blessed?"

"Yes. This phrase is the benediction of the tribe of priests. The signature is cabbalistic, the key to it has been handed down from time to time to only a chosen few. The part which I *can* read goes, 'The Lord bless thee and keep thee; The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his

countenance upon thee and give thee peace.' Keep it."

"What does it all mean, mamma," asked Miss Miriam, as they wended their way homeward.

"Don't say nothin'. I am so nervous, I don't know what to do."

The little woman got home tired, exhausted, panting. She got in while the servants were serving dinner.

"What did you learn, madame?" asked the doctor.

"Oh my!"

"What is it?"

"Well, doctor, I don't know what to say——"

"Oh, come, speak."

"Well, the gentile——"

"Yes——"

"Well, he——"

"Well what," sighed the doctor, perspiring under the suspense, "what did you find out?"

"I saw the orthodox rabbi."

"Yes."

"He says the gentile——," she gasped, amid severe palpitations of her good heart.

"The gentile what?" panted the physician, impatiently.

"The gentile is——"

"The gentile—is he in trouble?"

"The gentile—the gentile is a Jew."

AN ODD FELLOW.

Hermus was born in one of the wine growing towns on the Rhine. His father was a wealthy inn keeper and owner of large tracts of vineyard, most of which he acquired by inheritance. In later years he bottled the wines of his production and shipped them abroad, which brought him large returns and enhanced his fortune. This father was a miser, and his wife was much like himself.

Young Hermus grew up in the inn. Ever since he could remember he had seen his father dish out intoxicants, and his mother did the same. He saw people come in and take one drink, saw them take more, and saw whole companies come in and drink, and saw individuals and companies drink till they had to be carried to their homes. There was gambling and music day and night in the Inn on the Rhine, and it was frequently Hermus' duty to assist at the schank. When he was eight years old his father often boasted of him as a fine bartender.

Hermus went to school with the other children. The parents of some of the children were well-to-do, some less wealthy, and some were very poor.

The inn-keeper was the most prosperous man in

town. Nevertheless, Hermus never enjoyed the advantages that the poorest of the other children did. He got one suit of clothes a year and that was made of Canton flannel, and he had never owned an overcoat. When he used to eat what his mother thought too much, he would be mocked, abused, beaten. His father used to punish him unmercifully. The other children used to torment him by making remarks about the conspicuous patches he had in his flannellet suit—patches that would not match. The child would be tired in the morning and slothful at night; this occasioned frequent punishment from his parents. He was skilful at the schank, however, and they made him work nights till he fell asleep behind the bar, when they would spank him and put him to bed.

Other children enjoyed the luxuries of playthings, which Hermus never did, and had no time to think about. His sole ambition was to reach the age when they could not punish him so much. At home his father or his mother would beat him because, they claimed, he did not work enough, and at school the teacher would, because he was sluggish and stupid. He very often fell asleep at school, and was in the dunce's chair a great deal.

Hermus was never given a pfenning. If he wanted pennies, there was a bowling alley in the yard, and when there was nothing else for him to do he was allowed to set pins. The bowlers played for money, and the winner would give him a pfenning at the end of the game from the profits. One day he did not set his pins fast

enough and a drunken player threw a large ball at him, striking him on the head, and causing the boy to faint. He was picked up senseless. When his father looked into the reason of the outrage he considered it a sufficient explanation that the son was punished because he was not swift enough. The play continued, and the inebriate who threw the ball was not even reprimanded. He was a good customer.

Once a man had bragged at the inn that he could emit smoke through his eyes. He was just lighting a cigar. The crowd of customers listened to him with awe, they never heard of such a thing. They were anxious to see an exhibition of his skill. The wizard said that it would be necessary, while he would hold the cigar in his mouth, that someone go behind him and press his arms tight around his waist. One of the men volunteered, but the wizard insisted that it must be a boy. Hermus was called by his mother. The boy pressed his arms around the man tightly, as directed, his hands meeting in front. The wizard took both little hands as they met in front of him in his left, and gripped them tightly as if to hold them in position; then he began to smoke, and kept on puffing until he produced a good fire on the cigar, when he pressed the fiery end against the back of the boy's hand. The child struggled and tried to tear his hand away, but the strong man held it and still pressed the fire. Then Hermus screamed and fell in a faint. It was a joke. The wizard did not dare play his trick on a man. He had wanted a boy. When Hermus came to he was blamed

for simulating swooning and making a spectacle of himself and got whipped. This happened thirty years ago, but the scar of the wound produced by the joke of the wizard and his cigar can still be seen on Hermus' right hand.

At the age of ten the school principal told his father that Hermus was an idiot, and would never become anything, and that he was not worth the expense and trouble of teaching. So the boy was taken from school. His father gave him to a furniture and dry goods merchant in a small town in Saxony as an apprentice, and told the merchant that he was a good boy, but needed a whipping occasionally, and that whipped he would work better; and the master took advantage of the privilege. His father communicated all the nicknames the child had at home, and they were all practiced on him. Nevertheless, Hermus was glad he was away from home. He was no more in fear of being killed in brawls, he did not have to listen to the insensate stories of drunken customers and to join in the chorus of laughter at every bit of stupidity in order to make the inebriate believe that he was very witty and that his yarns were appreciated. He could now go to his bed in the warehouse at nine o'clock and sleep till six and get up refreshed and strong.

In his new environment Hermus was a bright boy. He liked his duties and he did not get punished as much as he used to at home; but when he *was* punished it hurt him the more, becaues he never knew why, and wondered if, unlike the other boys, it was his fate to be beaten

and kicked for nothing that he knew of, indefinitely. His father had told the merchant that it was necessary for the child's education that he get occasional beatings, and that unless they would be given the boy he would take him back home. That was the way this father understood it to be right to bring up a child, at least this one.

II.

Hermus had now served a year and was eleven years old. The master had been given to understand that he was thirteen when he was ten. Hermus now could roll and unroll a piece of cloth as large as himself with the skill of an expert; and he could move furniture from department to department with an ease and speed wonderful to behold. He could persuade a customer and tell all the virtues of a piece of goods in the same routine manner as his master, and was a valuable adjunct to the business.

But the boy became homesick. He longed to be with his mother, the mother that used to beat him and provoke his father to beating him. He was anxious to see his father, who used to waken him at all hours of the night and punish him for some wrong his mother had reported on him; and if the child cried too loudly he would take a rope, tie his hands and feet and throw him under a bed and keep him there till he would stop making a noise.

Hermus was considered a bad child, not from

what anyone knew of him, but from his reputation that his parents had frequent occasions to punish him; and who would think that such a father would unjustly punish his own child—or a mother—even if they *were* dealers in spirits!

Hermus went home. He had on the same Canton flannel suit in which he had left, which was now shrunken and time- and weatherbeaten. The old folk were glad to see him. He was bright and cheerful, full of life and versatility. He had changed.

Soon he was back in the old rut of sleepless nights, punishment, work behind the schank, remonstrances for eating too much bread, and all the miseries of a year ago. He would set pins and save his pfennings. A pfenning is one-fourth of one cent. When he had one hundred pfennings (one mark) his mother took them from him, saying that she would save them and would return them whenever the child would wish to buy something useful. In a few months the boy saved up four hundred and fifty-eight pfennings (about $1.15). He asked his mother for his savings, he wanted to buy a pair of boots. She refused to give him his savings. The child reminded her that she had promised to return the money whenever he would ask for it; but she said she had changed her mind, because the board and education and clothing she had given Hermus all his life were worth four hundred and fifty-eight pfennings and more, and that if he would speak any more about it she would beat him up and make father do the same. He spoke no more about it, and got both beatings, too.

One day Hermus' father was sick in bed. He had chills, nausea, convulsions, a general feeling of uneasines and discomfort, pains in the limbs, high fever and a peculiar inflammation of the skin of his neck and face. He never had been sick before to Hermus' knowledge. He had heard of fathers getting sick, dying and leaving orphans, and the orphans had no fathers, and that some of the orphans got other fathers, and that the step-fathers were never as good to the children as their own. Now his own father was sick, and the next stage to sickness is death! Suppose father should die and he become an orphan; or worse yet, get a step-father who would not be as good as this one! As he was thus meditating, gazing at the window and drawing images with his finger on the sweating pane, he heard his father groan. Horrors! He thought the end had come. He buried his face with his arm, drying his tears with his flannelet sleeve. His mother espied him as he tried to suppress the emotions provoked by his terrible thoughts. Her presence was quickly signalled by a sudden jerk at Hermus' ear, and the remark: "Crying, eh? Think that will keep him from beating you when he gets better? I'll have him skin you; just wait till he gets his erysipelas cured!"

When Hermus was quite a small boy he had a little sister. The sister was always sick. Everyone inquired about her, and Hermus hardly knew her; he could not have picked her out from among other children. He never saw her but once. He had looked at her when she was six months old and was whipped for it; so he

decided that a little sister in the family was not a thing for him to look at. He had heard that God helped if people prayed. There was a prayer book in the house. He was anxious that his little sister get well. He saw other boys play with their little sisters, but their parents did not have inns and vineyards. Still Hermus had long since decided that everything was just as it should be, otherwise it would not be so. He saw that every possible means was employed to get the little sister cured. She was cross-eyed, she had the measles, whooping cough, all sorts of fevers, the current maladies of the seasons, and the child had been treated for various diseases at the same time, the different diseases complicated and aggravated the little girl's condition. The doctor would come twice a day to see little Mary, and Hermus would go to the drug store to get medicine for her. How happy he was that he could contribute that much service to the relief of the little sister he was not allowed to see! When no one was near he would open the prayer book and begin to read. That was the way he best understood to pray. He read the book six times over, stopping when interrupted or endangered of discovery, and on the next opportunity starting to read where he had last left off. Mary was still sick. He wondered if he did not leave something undone. Yes, he had heard that people should kneel when they prayed, and the Almighty would then help the sooner. So one day when no one was near and the nurse was asleep he laid the breviary on little Mary's bed and kneeled down beside it, and continued to

read where he last left off. She was three years old, he was seven. When he was through he felt so contented, feeling that he did his best, all that could be done to make good prayer, as he had been on his knees for almost an hour without interruption.

Little Mary's cross eye had been fixed by the doctor, and the other ailments have gradually subsided. She got up and walked. The child recovered sooner than the doctor had expected, having said that there were so many complications that it would be a miracle if the child were saved. But many doctors say that, sometimes insincerely, in order that, when such patients do recover, it gives them the prestige of having saved hopeless cases.

III.

Hermus had a little brother, Joe. He loved his little brother very much; it was his pleasure to bathe and help dress him sometimes. Little Joe had come when his big brother was nine years old.

When Joe was a little over two years old he became sick. He had headaches and fevers, his little tongue was coated, and his father used to scrape it with a silver spoon, and the child suffered untold agony, which developed into acute meningitis. Joe ceased his sweet prattlings, and all the music furnished by the town band to the prominent and other lushers could not cheer Hermus. While the child was ill Hermus was

not allowed to see him, whilst the child, when he did say a word, called for Hermus, who was not allowed to go near him, because, the doctor said, the child needed absolute quiet.

Hermus prayed for his little brother as he did years ago for his sister. The local doctor gave up all hopes, and another physician was summoned from Vienna. The Vienna man looked sad and wise, and would never speak to anyone but the local doctor, and that at low breath. The child had not spoken in several days. One day the room where the child lay sick was deserted for a little while, the mother went to the kitchen or somewhere to get milk for him. Hermus seized the opportunity and ran in to see the little brother. He bent over the bed to touch the baby's feverd cheek with his lips. Little Joe turned his head and stretched his little lips toward the big brother, as the latter, with tearful face, gazed at him, contemplating that it might be for the last time. He kissed the child's lips, and the baby muttered faintly, "Hermus!"

Hermus knelt down at the bedside of the child and wept, and then he began to pray as he never did before, without the book this time, and when he heard the rustling of his mother's skirt, swishing louder and louder as she approached, he hurried out through the front door to escape a beating or a cursing.

The child died early next morning, and for many months, for years after the child had been laid to rest, and when everyone else had long since forgotten it, Hermus was not known to smile. He was mourning for his beloved little

brother, the only member of the family who had never wronged him. It was pitiful to watch Hermus crying as if his heart would part from his body, his plaint was so pathetic that when he started everyone cried with him, stopping when he stopped. On the death of the child the father became furious, and declared that God had wronged him, that He was a coward, that He ought to act like a man and fight it out face to face if He had anything against one. He likened Him to a vulgar woodman who for some minor object would fell the finest sapling and use it as a bow or other less important stick to fasten his timber to the wagon, and wantonly disregard the fact that he is taking a life. He protested that the child was too young to have sinned so as to deserve death; and he challenged God to come and have a fight with him, threatening to tear His hair and beard and to demolish Him from the universe.

He never had used such language before. He had used to give Hermus the most cruel punishments with the greatest of nonchalance, without moving a muscle toward showing temper or even displeasure, and here he was challenging the Maker for a fight!

Who knows but what he was not worthy of little Joe! Who knows but Joe was saved from Hermus' fate! Who knows but Joe was taken from the world as a punishment to a miser who could not appreciate such a blessing as a child! Ah, who knows!

He was a highly respected man in the community for honesty. He never drank, even with

his best customers; he was a man of fair education, and this was the first time that Hermus ever observed him showing real temper or using a profane word. Inwardly the boy thought that if his father were to raise such a protest for his death he would wish to die. It gave him a new idea, the notion came to him that probably for all his paternal cruelty there seemed to be some latent something in him that was a father. But if that was so, why was his dramshop so much dearer to his heart than his child? Why did not he act as another boy's father would have acted if such a trick had been played on him with that cigar; or why did he not beat up or prosecute the man that fired the bowling ball at his son? Why did he not dress his young son as other fathers of means did? And why did he punish a child who was so much smaller than himself, and so unable to resist him or defend himself against him, so severely? And why did not he keep his young children away from the influences of the inn?

Thus Hermus meditated. He was a boy of tender years, but he had suffered enough to develop an ability to contemplate his own wants.

The baby was buried as of course. Hermus' lot was hard, as usually, only worse because his mother would curse him much, and among other things, she would curse her fate that the little boy died instead of Hermus, and she would not hesitate lamenting it in loud words when Hermus was present. She wanted him to hear it.

One day Hermus went to the pantry and helped himself to bread. The rule was that he

should ask; but when he did ask, although he usually got the slice of bread he also got a scolding, for eating too much, which he wanted to avoid as he helped himself; and when he did this his little sister, Mary, who was now eight years old, went and told on him, just for the fun of seeing him get the scolding. He remonstrated with her kindly, as a bigger brother would, and she answered: "I do not like you at all. Little Joe died and you did not. *You* should have died instead." She had learned the speech from her mother, verbatim.

Hermus said nothing. He just thought of the time when he used to pray for her, and nodded. He was sullen anyway, because now his little brother was gone, and there was nothing to cheer him. He observed a great deal and said little. When he did say anything he usually did *that* wrong, as he had been blamed so much for doing things wrong, and for not knowing anything, that whatever he had to do he tried to change and do and say differently than he at first intended, because that great deal of blame had got him actually to believe that he was all wrong, so that, no matter how right he was, he spoiled it by the changing. He felt a great deal, and very deeply, but was a boy of few words, especially in view of the fearful summary punishments.

He had another brother, Jesse. Jesse was two years his junior, his mother's favorite, and knew it. He had enjoyed all the pleasures of the other children, as he was the youngest son—which Hermus never did. He used to tell stories about

his bigger brother to his parents, which sometimes were exaggerated and sometimes not true at all, and Hermus used to get punished on the strength of what Jesse had said about him, without the benefit of hearing or explanation. But Jesse reached the limit when he was five years old and Hermus seven. Hermus was tired; he had been helping in the inn till he could work no longer, so he went to bed and fell asleep. As he lay there asleep, little Jesse crawled out of his bed, went to him and pinched him hard. It hurt him much; when he awoke he saw his little brother run out of the room, after pinching him where he had been vaccinated a few days ago, causing him excruciating pain. Soon after he fell asleep again he was aroused by his mother's pulling his ear and cursing him, venting on him all the maledictions common to the witches of the Orient. The smaller brother, after pinching him, had complained to the mother, amid screams, that Hermus had pinched *him*. Hermus did not speak to his younger brother for a long time thereafter, which fact occasioned him many severe punishments.

Such was the family from which Hermus came, and he had nothing to do with the selection of it! He never heard a tender word addressed to him, and if such a thing ever did happen, it must have been when he was so small that his memory did not run that far.

When Hermus was thirteen he heard his father grumble to his mother, and it was intended that he should hear it, that Hermus was growing to be a big boy, and that in addition to feeding him,

which was no investment, there was a danger of being taxed for having him in the house. The hint was pointed enough. A few days thereafter the father, in the same manner, said that since Hermus was at home the luck of the liquor business was declining, and the daily gross receipts were smaller than they used to be while he had been away, and he was sure the boy was the hoodoo—the cause—of the fact.

The father was anxious enough that the boy, if anyhing, should be other than a liquor man. He knew that something was wrong with the child. The boy had not been known to smile once in many moons. He could not see that the fault was in the environment.

There was not much melody or sweetness in the inn-keeper's tone, nor did he try to exercise any tact about treating the boy's feelings gently. He had been told that occasionally children would leave home, go far away, and at unexpected times surprise their parents as successes. He might have sent Hermus to some school or to some infirmary if he had thought the boy was ill; but the school principal had told him that the child would not be a success to teach, besides, the inn-keeper was stingy, so he just threw out his hints in that uncouth way of his, at home. Neighbors never knew of the troubles with the family as Hermus suffered them.

IV.

At the age of thirteen one day Hermus gathered his nerves as one does who, on a winter's

morning resolves to take an ice bath, and announced that he would leave forever and that they would never hear about him if he could help it, and immediately he proceeded to pack up his armful of clothes and left. When he started to pack his mother cried, his father did not think he meant it, and Hermus, in the sternness of his resolve, did not consider his mother's tears as anything else than a woman's crying just because she did not know just what would be the most proper thing to do.

It may have been so, and it may be that the crisis had wrought a change upon her; but Hermus resolved to go, and hoped to appear strong long enough to get out without a beating.

He left home without a penny, and went wither his eyes had led him; he was not particular about the points of the compass. He worked his way as every other wanderer. He looked for various occupations, and he found work from time to time which enabled him to earn small amounts to pay his way. He was happy at whatever he worked because he was not beaten. He had developed an unnatural fear of everybody and every thing. Even in later years, occasionally, he would turn his head suddenly, involuntarily, as if to watch for and ward off an imaginary blow. This nervousness developed from the fact that he had often been unexpectedly surprised, even wakened from sleep, by a beating, and he used to get them so regularly—or rather irregularly and often.

When he was seven or eight years old he would show symptoms of a functional disorder of the

nervous system, probably brought about by the ill-treatment he had sustained at the hands of his parents. The child seemingly grimaced or jerked the arm, sometimes the hand, as if in imitation; the motions would be followed by irregular jactitations of the muscles of the face and the shoulder, and sometimes by rhythmic movements of the arms and hands. The child would show more of these symptoms after punishment than at other times, and the parents forbade him to exercise these movements. Little Jesse was told to watch him and report if he saw him do them, and little Mary had the same commission. He did not know when he was doing them, and they told on him, and the parents would beat him for going through the motions. These actions were the regular symptoms of a nervous disease called chorea, popularly known as St. Vitus' dance, and for years they would punish him for making grimaces he was not aware of, and which supposed wrong he did not know when he was committing. After punishment he would do these things to a greater extent than before. Then they would punish him again. Then, his nerves being more agitated, he did them the more; and so, thinking that he was acting in spite, they simply hated him.

After he left home the reaction handled him rather roughly, but he had to work for a living and for a future, and what infirmities he had he felt he just had to live down. He started out in the world with the resolution to keep out of the influences of liquor, and to go where they would not punish him as they used to. He went from

city to city, walking. He worked at various occupations, in an art studio, in a dry goods store, in a drug store, in a doctor's office, in a picture frame factory, in a laundry, in a wholesale grocery, in a plow factory, in a bank, and in many other establishments, from time to time, taking advantage of every opportunity he had of reading the books he saw around him. He went through Italy, France, Hungary, Austria, Turkey, Belgium and Spain, managing to pick up some learning in his various employments, spending all of his own time with books, such as he would find around him, or could borrow or buy. He had no one to advise him what to read, so he read omnivorously. Whatever he read he found interesting, because in all the books he found there were things he never heard of before.

He read because he had nothing else to do. He read because he wanted an education; and he read because he wanted to improve himself in the languages of the countries, and, being a stranger, and having no friends, he appreciated the good companionship of books. He found self instructors in book stores; from these he learned the grammar of the local tongue, and the language he picked up in his daily intercourse with his employers and the people around him, and from the books and newpsapers which he was reading; and whatever words he could not understand, he looked up in the dictionary. He did not make friends, as everyone about him was in his native land, had his own relations near, and he was only a foreigner, with a pronounced accent. He was

content, however, and his chief aim now was never to be without some occupation, no matter how small the income.

At the age of seventeen Hermus landed in New York. Here he found a job in a public library on Second Avenue, where his chief duties were to keep the card system in order, and to put paper covers on all the new books that came in, and to change the soiled paper covers for new. A new world had opened up to him, he became acquainted with books he had never heard of before, and the many reference books impressed him forcibly. This tremendous houseful of lore reminded him of his ignorance, and made him the more hungry for learning. There were thousands of books before him, and he was not allowed to read. There was an old maid in charge of the institution. When he was assigned to work under her, she told him that a certain number of books had to be covered by him each day. At first it was hard for him to do all that in a day, but as he became accustomed to the work he covered the number of books allotted for a day in two hours, and the card system was easy to keep and it did not take much time. He worked eagerly to increase his speed in book covering, in order to have opportunity to read. But when the lady found later that he had a great deal of leisure, she gradually doubled, and later trebled, his allotment, until, at last, she gave him to understand that it was against the rules for him to read, but that he must put in all his time covering books. Still, he kept his job and did his reading at home, in his furnished

room—furnished with a bed and a chair, and a kerosene lamp, which sat on the window sill, until he improved his English and found better employment, still continuing his studies.

Jesse, his younger brother, followed him to America—at least he came to New York, and found his brother's name in the directory—and he looked him up. Hermus was not especially anxious to see him, still he helped him financially. The sight of him brought back the miseries of the past, which he was longing to forget, and in order to forget which he tried hard to be busy every wake moment of his life—to save him from thinking of Jesse and that home! He well remembered the stories told by this brother, which culminated in Hermus' summary punishments. He remembered him sitting opposite him in the schank in order to find a nervous movement made by his sick brother, and to report on him that he had again practiced the grimace, or the rhythmic motions of the hands. He remembered that many a time he did not exercise them at all, but that the boy had said that he did, just to see him punished. The very knowledge that his little brother was sitting there or following him for the purpose of detecting one of those nervous twitchings made him nervous, and was a sufficient cause to excite him into a relapse.

Jesse well knew that his brother did not wish to see him, and that it enervated Hermus to even be reminded of him. That was just what he wanted. He wanted to bring Hermus down, if possible, to his own level, both materially as well as morally, as well, as also, in the esteem of his

parents abroad, who by now had heard that Hermus was doing well in America, and, indeed they used to lament the idea that they had not understood him or treated him right while he was with them. Jesse would cause anonymous letters to be written to his parents about Hermus, derogatory to his brother's character. Then he would find out who Hermus' acquaintances and well wishers were. Jesse would call on them, shabby and dirty as he was, and introduce himself and tell them that he heard they were friends of his brother's and that he had made fortunes in the West and that he was looking for his brother with a view of helping him financially. It was a queer manner, and no one that sincerely intends to do such a thing would do it just that way. But this was one of the many devices he would concoct for the purpose of luring his brother into his company. The brother knew him well. He would be informed of the younger brother's inquiries of him. He knew! And it would gnaw at his heart, and he would keep on suffering and weeping when no eye saw. He did not wish to see him or to be pestered by his calls.

Jesse would go to his brother's office during the lunch hours, when he was sure not to find him in, and talk to the office boy there, showing off with a large roll, the outside of which was a real dollar bill, as evidence that he had money, and tell the boy that he was looking for his brother with a view of giving him money. When he did meet Hermus he asked *him* for money.

Such and similar were the contemptible means whereby he annoyed Hermus; and it would be

hard for anyone to fathom the multitude of low-down tricks Jesse played on him except for one who himself had seen such a black sheep and a scoundrel in some family within the province of his own ken.

In addition to the many other bitter reminiscences Hermus well remembered how, when the smaller brother wanted anything Hermus had, he simply demanded it, threatening that if he refused he would tell that he was again grimacing or jactitating; and he could certainly never forget the incident of his pinching his vaccinated arm and going out in his night shirt to complain that the other punished him. He could not help being reminded at the sight of him how much this brother had added to his already unhappy existence as a child. Hermus was studying and working. He now had some money saved up and held a good position; Jesse would call on him at his work and demand money. Hermus granted all his requests quickly, as he was anxious to get him out; his appearance and manner were not nice. There was a world of contrast between the two brothers. When Hermus did not feel that he could do all that the brother demanded, he threatened to put up a job on him.

When Jesse *did* work at all he was around hotels; but he was no success. He was impudent. He had begged, borrowed, stolen, tramped, delighted in the vulgar tricks of the lower world—and did not hesitate to brag about his adventures and conquests. He would just as lief engage in a bloody street brawl as not. When he looked up Hermus he wanted money. One day Hermus

refused to give him more than five dollars, and he became disorderly in the office where Hermus worked, and said out loudly, among other things, "Look here, you will pay that money you owe me or you'll be sorry—that's all." Everyone in the office heard this, and in the minds of some of the clerks, and especially of those who would have liked Hermus' position and were below him in rank, the disorder was gratifying, and certainly not to the decorum of the place. Besides, all knew that Hermus was a foreigner, and those below him were secretly jealous of him, and any incident that might discredit him would be a sort of a point in their favor against him. The younger brother, then, in a lower tone, told Hermus in German, "If you will not do things I want you to, I'll put up jobs on you. You do not know whom you are dealing with. I have men and women friends who would swear to anything."

Hermus granted his request then in order to get rid of him, and the younger brother proceeded to call at the residence of his brother, spoke to the landlady, told her he was his brother, and that he was looking for him, because his older brother had run away from Europe and took his money with him. The only explanation Hermus made at the office and at home was that the young man was his brother—but as for the rest, he just suffered in silence.

At the age of twenty-four, Hermus had parchments from a medical school and from a law school, and was now studying engineering. He did not wish to give up his position, and still, having his evenings for himself, and having ac-

customed himself to having something to study all the time, and being fond of occupation, he proceeded to study, probably for learning's own sake too, and for the diversion such studies furnished. Later he became city editor of one of the daily papers, but he did not like some of the things about that particular establishment. He resigned and wrote special articles. Then he opened a law office, and later practiced both law and medicine at the same time. In the beginning the revenues of both professions had barely covered his expenses, but things looked prosperous, and prospects were good. Anon Jesse popped up and began his old tricks of coming into the office at unexpected times, in the same old manner, with the same sort of demands and threats. Hermus became discouraged and gave up his office. He knew his brother was bound to be an endless source of disgrace to him; he did not care to prosecute him; he did not want to have anything to do with him. He went West to supervise the construction of a railroad bridge, as engineer; after this whatever he had touched was a success.

V.

One day Hermus heard of a little girl of eight years. The child was an orphan and lived with a sister who was married to a foreman in an oil-cloth factory. The child was beaten and abused. She had to do the washing of the married sister and her two children. The little girl would wash and scrub and cook and nurse, and get up early to

prepare breakfast and call her sot of a brother-in-law in order that he might not be late going to the shop; and when she was not swift about her duties the brother-in-law had his wife's consent to punish her.

"Madam," said Hermus, as he entered the home of the oilcloth foreman with a police officer, "I hear that your litle sister, Hallie, is not going to school as she should, and that she is working more than she ought to at her present age."

"Well, I'll tell you, Mister," said the edentated sister of twenty-five summers, carbuncled complexion and traces of much whiskey in her breath, "I made up my mind that I'll get my money's worth out of them, that's all. I took care of my other sister, and when she left school she got a job in my husband's department and earned nine dollars a week. She would get her wages and bring the money home to me like a good girl. I expected she would work and earn long enough to repay me for my trouble of taking care of her for the three and a half years between the time my mother died and the time she got the job. But instead, why, she did me dirt——"

"Did you dirt!"

"Yes, she did not work quite four years when off she goes and gets married—that's what she did—married *a bookkeeper,* who has nothing to do but sit in a fine office with a white collar and cuffs on, play with a pen and get more money than my husband gets for working, and her husband actually had the impudence of telling me that we have no business to have beer or whiskey

in the house, and that I ought to go to a dentist because it is sickening to be near me, and that he did not want me and my husband to come to visit them when any of *his* friends were there; because we are not *fine* enough for them, I suppose.

"Look here," she continued, opening a dilapidated trunk and unrolling a yellow file of time-stained documents. "My father was a captain in the Civil War, and his great grandfather fought in both wars with England, and we are good enough for anybody."

"I am afraid you do not understand your brother-in-law," said Hermus. "If he were not proud of all that he would not advise you to have your teeth repaired and for both of you to stop drinking—he would probably not take that much interest in you. But that is not the issue here——"

"Well, what the hell *is* the damn issue," roared a big man in a red undershirt who sat at the kitchen table, with a tin can of lager and a box of crackers before him. "State what you want—and Officer Mulligan, what do *you* want here?" starting towards the callers.

"The officer came with me. I just want to see to it that the child cease working as she does and that she go to school as she should, and I will take it upon myself——"

"Take upon yourself nothing!" interrupted the sister. "I gave the other one just such chances, and she went back on me. She is a *lady* now, and we are not good enough for her now. I will not nourish another snake in the grass——"

"Madam, you do not have to. I shall take it upon myself to relieve you of nourishing either a snake or this child, and to see to it that the child and you be relieved of each other, and this will be done within three days."

"You can take her right now, if you want to."

Hermus lost no time. He looked at Officer Mulligan. Mulligan understood. The officer took the child by the hand and told her that he would take her to his house where she could play with his own children.

"Wait, let me clean her up," said the sister, as she threw a bundle on a chair and ordered the child to stop sweeping and change her clothes.

"That ain't necessary," said the policeman. "I got five kids of me own, three of 'em is girls, and I know I'll be able to fit her with gladder rags than that truck."

The child seemed to understand that it was all for her own good, as if by instinct, and offered no resistance, except when her sister kissed her and said, "Go with the officer, he'll lock you in the jail," when she started to cry some. It did not take Hermus long to reassure her, however, and the little girl seemed to be satisfied.

Hallie was placed in the Mulligan home until Hermus found school connections for her, when he placed her with a family in the vicinity of the child's school.

Hermus now felt that he had a little friend, a pet and a charge. How proud and happy he was that he could do that much towards relieving the sorrows of the world? The little girl was well

dressed and fed, and was in every other respect equal to the other children. Hermus had written to her sister that she could see the child on Thirty-fourth Street, at the home of Mrs. Carter, but the child had been in the new atmosphere three and a half years when she came to see her for the first time, upon invitation of the child, in her own writing, to come and see how happy she was with her roomful of Christmas presents.

The sister came with her husband, Mr. Baxter, the foreman. The child was glad to see them, while the couple of kinsfolk gazed at the beauty of the child and then upon each other, in shame. Little Hallie called their attention to her two alligator skin trunks, her two dolls, almost as large as herself, her boxful of extra doll dresses, her new fountain pen, her picture books, her closet full of clothes, her sealskins and other fur collars, her new muff, a boxful of gloves, her new little shoes and leggings and gold pins and buttons and a little silver watch and the pretty Christmas tree with boxes of candy, two rings and packages still unopened hanging upon it between the candles and decorations.

"Who does all this for you?" asked Mrs. Baxter.

"My brother," said the child, merrily.

"You know you have no brother. He is nobody to you."

"I love him though, that is who-body he is to me. Look what he told me to give you."

The child handed her a twenty dollar gold piece.

"Isn't he lovely!" she exclaimed.

"You'll be in love with him next," protested Mr. Baxter.

"When you come again—by next Christmas—I'll play on the piano for you," said the child, reaching for her sister's hand.

"Are you going to study that?"

"I have been, for almost a year, but the teacher says I must not play for anyone yet, just practice my little pieces."

Something seemed to choke the visitors. They stood stunned and silent for awhile. Mrs. Baxter began to shed tears and her husband to clear his throat. He looked about him much embarrassed, searching for a cuspidor, until the child led him to the bath room. The landlady entered and stayed for a few minutes in the child's room, during which time the Baxters did not say a word, and then they left, Mrs. Baxter weeping.

On the way homeward Timothy Baxter wanted to borrow the gold piece from his wife, but she would not stand for it. After much fussing, however, they agreed to change the coin and spend two dollars of it on liquor, but Mrs. Baxter insisted that she would have her teeth fixed for the balance.

Hermus watched the development of his little friend as lovingly as you watch your flowers, and he found a world of pleasure in the well-merited affection of the dearling. Hermus hardly realized that Hallie had soon grown to be a young lady, and was still fond of him. The Baxters did not come again, but Hermus occasionally brought little things and got little "Sister" to send them to Mrs. Baxter with her love.

Hermus would delight in helping Hallie with her lessons. When she did not understand anything she would wait till he came, and asked. If it was very important she would call her "Brother" by telephone and ask; and how he loved to teach her and tell her how to do things! When he was out of town, by the time he came back she had pages full of questions jotted down for him to answer. She had now grown big enough to be a chum to Hermus. She was a great comfort to him. He often left the city on account of business; this fact occasioned the necessity of Hallie's frequent movings and changes of school.

The fact that Jesse occasioned him so much disgrace made Hermus a sort of a rover. He could not stand disgrace; he would offer no explanations, and people would form opinions. He would move soon after his brother would be on his trail. He would fix up a bachelor's home fit for a king, part of which was a combination of a library, chemical laboratory, studio, machine shop, place of music and mirth and tools and inventions. Everything was tasteful and immaculate. He had invented several patents, some of which he sold and some he gave away.

He was sent to the legislature.

He soon learned that when a new member came to the Capitol the first thing his colleagues did was to teach him to play poker. Then they introduced him to their friends who had no particular professions, but *happened* to be at the capital on business, and who always talked of bills they would prefer passed. These friends were what

they called lobbyists. These lobbyists managed to get in with members of the legislature and play poker with them. They were good players, but still they would lose. They lost wilfully in order that the office-holders should win. This was considered respectable, and the oldest and most usual way of bribing legislators. Everyone knew what these men were there for, and still all played with them and won, and then vote for the measures of these lobbyists. These lobbyists were professionals. That was all they did, and people and corporations who wanted favors would transact their business with them, and the lobbyists did the rest. Occasionally members would deceive such lobbyists, and those who did would have no other chances to play poker and win as before, and then, for some unexplained reasons, their free railroad passes would be withdrawn.

Hermus could not reform this system alone; nor was there any way to prove such acts to be bribery, and thus bring the culprits to justice. He felt he could not effectively do the service for which he was elected. He did not see as much honor in the office as he was hoping to find. He resigned, and came back to his work, his books and—Hallie, who was now twenty-one years old, with a heavy heart.

Hallie was enraptured at his call. She had hundreds of notations of things she wanted to ask him. No one had as much patience with her as Hermus. When he could not answer questions of hers offhand, he would go through a houseful of books if necessary, and he regarded no bounds

between day and night until her little quests were gratified.

"Little Sister," he said, "it will soon be time for you to leave me for a better field of happiness."

She could not stand it. She thought it a hint for perpetual separation. It all dawned upon her. She was only the adoptling of a benevolent man, who raised her and would now throw her into the cold world. Many thoughts agitated her in that moment. She thought for a second that her friend had lost all he had, and that she had now become a heavy charge upon him. She bethought her age, and that she was no kin to him. She wept bitterly.

"I'd rather die than leave you. Let me go to work for my living, but be my friend, my father, my brother, my everyone, just as you have been all these years. I could not leave you——" she sobbed.

"You are now old enough to marry, child—and you'll find someone and leave me. That is what I meant, and then—and then I shall again be alone in the world."

"You will not be. There is no one like you; and I want to be your little sister—forever."

"Forever is a long time. I am not quite so selfish as to expect from you all that sacrifice. You are a well qualified young lady, good enough for any gentleman. Any good man would be proud to have you. You must not ignore that fact. I am an old bachelor, your senior by fifteen years. People will talk and——"

"Is that such a big difference?" she sobbed.

"I'd be happy to stay your 'Little Sister' if you were a hundred years my senior. Tell me, who intruded into your life to take my—my place?"

"No one."

"And can you forget how good you used to be to me; and would you now, all of a sudden, go back on me?"

"I am afraid you do not understand. I should always look out for you; but I want you to enjoy some of the freedom of the world. I should take care of you the same as always——"

"Hermus."

"Yes."

"There used to be a time when you would tell me your plans. You never used to talk in riddles with me. Now, won't you please use plain English and tell me what's up. Now, honestly, sincerely, truly——"

"Well, I'll tell you. You have been the sunshine of my life for years, and I think of you more and more every day. You are old enough to marry. No one thinks of you more than I, but it would be unfair of me to talk like that to you. I am too old for you; and it would seem like taking an unfair advantage—as if I had picked you for that purpose—years ago. You like me like a child. My love for the little bud has increased as it bloomed forth, and——"

Miss Hallie could always consult Hermus. She would always ask him how to do and what to do. How she wished she could ask him what words to say to suit her purpose now!

"I know," she sighed.

"You do? What do you know?"

"What's the use, Old Man, be open with me. There is a woman in the case. Who is she? O, tell me; then I'll go away, so as not to make her jealous. 'Fess up!"

"Yes, Hallie," patting her dimpling hand and smiling, "there *is* a woman——"

She seemed to conjecture, but she doubted. She was so uncertain. Her words were lacking. She was so dependent on him for what to do and how, that almost mechanically, she was going to ask him what to say now, when she whispered, "I knew it; you'll tell me who it is, won't you?"

"If you promise not to tell."

"You know I never tell."

"One cannot tell, you know——"

"Now," she said resolvedly, reaching high and holding on to his shoulders, "Who is she?"

"Ah, that's the question."

"Yes, and you will answer it."

"Yes, and I shall have to answer it."

"Well, who is it, sir?"

"Well," said he, with his arms gently around her, and his head lowered sideways, to her ear, "guess."

"How can I guess? You never told me you knew any girls; and I have no idea whom you know. Yes, I have an idea. . . . No, I haven't. . . . Who is it? Please say it; do not hold me in such awful suspense. Who is it?"

"Well, it is a young lady I have known for thirteen years. She has been very kind to me in times gone by, and I am very grateful to her. I don't know that she would have me, but I won-

der. She is much younger than I am—a good old friend. You know her, too."

"Where does she live?"

"Not far from here."

"And what is her name?"

"Hallie."

"O, you are such an odd fellow—it is so sudden—kiss me, quick."

BROTHER MASONS.

There never was a more healthy, chunky, powerful little girl in the vicinity, and as her years increased the sturdiness developed the more, and it occasioned her parents no little anxiety that the little girl's strength seemed too great for her immature frame. When she was twelve years old, but for the short skirt superimposed by custom, she might have passed for a marriageable young lady. She had one of those miens that would provoke a smile on every countenance which obtained a glimpse of her; and her round, fleshy face, large blue eyes, light brown hair and those eternal mellow dimples, and that perpetual gaze of innocence, beauty and curiosity, that elastic gait of dignity, that dainty ponderousity, and that indifferent, aimless, immaculate and delicate expression of good nature, have long been the sunshine and pride of dim Delancey Street. To the neighbors who have watched her since she was in the cradle, with whose little ones she had played, and whose smaller children she had time and again sung to sleep, to the little boys with whom she ran races, played ball, swam, wrestled, and to all those who had occasion to hear her sing the popular ditties of the day, and the little classics she had accidentally picked up,

she was the very fountain of sweetness, fairy laughter and melody. Her very words as they escaped the labia, on the way from the chords in her throat as they puffed, pulsed and reverberated into liberty, issued a music that transcended the atmosphere—even her merest speaking voice—to enjoy the like of which one had to possess the acquaintance of—Bridget.

She had expressed the ambition that when she grew up to be a man she would be a policeman. Later she thought a drayman had a better time, because he was absolute master of horses and did not have to hitch on in order to enjoy the pleasure of a ride. As her tender days rolled by her ambitions rambled from the aforesaid futures through the enviable callings of street car conductor, night watchman, fireman, chimney sweep, carpenter, switchman, brakeman—according to the various degrees of skill, strength or bravery displayed in the vocations with which her momentary observations impressed her; and there was nothing to dishearten her harmless longings and her confidence in their possibility. Nor was she much disappointed when, as years elapsed, she learned her ambitions were impossible; but submitting to the inevitable, she resolved that when she grew up she would be a cook. Even this determination was transitory and subject to impressions, as the first. She thought scrubbing in the factory paid better than washing, and that it would be fun to work in a department store, where, she heard from Mollie Greer, there was a floor-walker, who was bossy and inconsiderate, that the girls submitted to his abuses because

when he would report them they would be in danger of losing their employments, and when she grew up, and were treated in that manner, she would enjoy the pleasure of thrashing him.

One day she passed a neighboring saloon and wished she were the bartender. There was a clumsy bartender grappling with an inebriate, trying to evict him, but the loaded customer held on to the swing door. Bridget thought she would squeeze the unwelcome customer's wrist and the paralytic effect of her pressure would cause him to release his hold. She thought if she were a teacher she would play with the children, and sometimes remove the desks and throw a few barrels of sand on the floor, hold a cane and watch fair play among them. She did not care for the stage. One morning a woman was picked up in the alley, who, when brought to, said she was an actress. Her father did patrol duty and Bridget was near. He was going to call an ambulance, but Bridget took her home, put her to bed and nursed her. The actress declaimed some, which Bridget might have liked but for the odor which at the same time issued from the mouth of the tragedienne, then her white pillows were stained from the color that faded from the actress' lips and cheeks, and when she saw the patient hang her hair on the foot of the bed, lay her teeth on the mantle, and take many other parts of her anatomy asunder, and lay them around, she decided that the drama consisted of people who had to be taken apart till nothing but a skeleton remained to go to bed with, and she abhorred the very meditation of it.

The boys organized a Masonic society and Bridget was the only girl admitted. Eddie Field contributed an old kimona of his mother's to serve as a uniform for the master; his father was a Mason, that is why, he said, he knew that was necessary. Gottlieb Schulz was made a walking delegate, but his office required a sword and as there was none in the crowd, Gus Liebling brought two red handled discarded knives which had been so much sharpened in his father's butcher shop, that only the thick backs remained, with just enough acuteness to their edges to leave a trace of their past identity; and as one person could not use two swords, another walking delegate was elected. They elected a noble-grand to guard the entrance to the shed where the meetings took place. No one was obligated until he served his apprenticeship by hauling a bucket of sand, a few bricks, a bagful or two of pebbles, some lime, plaster of Paris, or by breaking stones and doing other useful Masonic work. The old bricks would be broken, and the pebble and sand and the whole conglomeration would be mixed in soap boxes with water, and the sweepings which one of the boys brought from his father's Portland cement shop were then thrown in, making good concrete, which would be used for the erection of a throne for the master, benches for the officers and walking delegates, and other things, by shaping the concrete in moulds first made from old boxes. The apprenticeship was the hardest part of the sect, because they sometimes had miles to go in search of the necessary material; and many would never

finish working their ways because they became discouraged by the duties imposed on apprentices. Those who went through were initiated, sworn to secrecy, obedience, honesty, fraternity, charity and fair play; then they obtained from the walking delegates their grips and pass-words, solemnized the ceremony by horizontal and lateral movements of the right hand, indicating in what manner they should be slain with the swords of the walking delegates, which would be tied to their girths with remnants of clothesline, if they betrayed the secrets; and they ended the initiation with solemn oaths, yells, shrieks, cheers and crossings of the hearts. They had to use Schmalz intead of the goat. Schmalz belonged to the butcher; he was not as agile as a goat, but much safer. They had once borrowed Dora Duggin's billy goat, but he became so balky that he nearly broke up the lodge, on which account there was suspension of meetings for several days, because most of the leading members sustained some injury or other in trying to initiate the goat to his duties in the fraternity. They would have tried again, but Dora would not let her goat go unless she be made a Mason, which was voted down. Schmalz was a lazy Saint Bernard, so fat that it was a great effort for him to move sometimes. When he was commanded to stand with the knight on his back he would walk aimlessly, hanging out his tongue and paying no attention to orders; then they would beat him. When they wanted him to give a candidate a fast ride, he would lie down, ignoring everything; but he was patient. Occasionally he would

display great interest in the proceedings; and when he was not ridden for a long time he would go to one of the members and smell and kiss and fondle and flatter him till he would persuade him to sit on his back instead of on the concrete lodge-made brick. At times, again, he would run so fast that the rider had to hold on to his long hair and ears, but this was not common. There was a change of officers every week. They called each other brothers. When Brother Bridget presided she would renounce and expel boys who would commit certain offenses, and would not associate with those who associated with them, and as everyone was ambitious for her society, she was an elevating influence generally. If one fought with a boy below his own size, she expelled him for cowardice.

II.

When Bridget was fourteen years old, on a dark evening, when the snow was driven by the west wind, and it was hard to catch a breath when the storm broke the current to the mouth or nose, and the walk was glazed with frost, a long-haired spaniel, half dressed in woolen, seeking further protection against the weather. pecked into her skirt and pulled it; as she turned towards it the wind blew into her mouth, which just opened to wondering, and she slipped; as she grasped in the atmosphere to recover her balance and gasped for breath she dropped her purse, which was lifted by a well dressed stranger, who hastily caried it off. She soon recovered her

equilibrium and followed and took the culprit by the nape and held on till he surrendered the booty, then she nonchalantly opened it, gave her victim a dollar and released him. She thought he must have been poor and needing it. Then she went home and fainted, and remained in bed for several days.

Her music teacher came the next day, but there was no lesson. Her mother was not living now. The cause of her death was never communicated to Bridget. Bridget, being an exceptionally powerful and healthy child, found the sedate diversions of the other little girls not violent enough; girls of her development were not common in the city, so most of her chums were boys, and she participated in most of their games and pranks.

One day they played funeral, and some of the children were stretched out for dead; one boy had a camera and photographed the dead, made copies of the pictures of the psuedo corpses, biers, flowers, shrouds, palls and all, and distributed them among his merry companions. Years after a number of various photographs had thus been taken, a collection of which was among the playthings of Bridget, her mother, one day, prompted by curiosity, looked over them, when she came across Bridget stretched over two chairs, decked with white, flowers under and all around her, dimpling as if alive. She kissed the picture, then shed a tear, everything turned gloomy, a horrible distress befell her, she began to lament: She thought she had lived with the child all the time, she forgot that she was dead

all these years, she wondered how she could ever get over the loss of Bridget, then she gave a shriek, and a weird, insane, hoarse cry of agony, and fell against the glass door leading to the library. When she was raised and put to bed there issued from her horrified bosom a few terrible, gurgling sounds which threatended to stretch her pharynx out of proportion. The physician came too late. The picture, which was found on the floor, was destroyed.

The bell rang, and the music teacher who sat there for the plural purpose of warming herself, filling in the time which the lesson would take, visiting with the patient and making herself generally useful, went to the door. A gentleman with a foreign accent inquired for Mrs. Bridget Patricia de Laney. Madame Delevan informed him that Mrs. Delaney died two years ago and her daughter, Bridget Delaney, was indisposed. The stranger presented his card:

BARON HEINRICH HEIMLEIBLICHER,
DOCTOR OF RIGHTS,
Vienna, Austria.

He came to notify Mrs. Delaney that her grand uncle, a bachelor, an officer of the Austrian army and member of the Legion d'Honneur, who died a month ago, bequeathed to her his vast personal estate, consisting of West Shore bonds, Servian and Italian government bonds, and some Austrian government lottery certificates, one of which, No. 13861, made the haupttreffer of two hundred thousand crowns, which was now due with one

per cent. interest. The musicienne called up the police division of which Mr. Delaney was now captain and gave him the tidings. The captain brought his friend, Attorney Kohensohn, with him, and the lawyers of the two continents encountered no difficulty in making Bridget the sole personal representative of the estate of the late General von Moriaertie.

Bridget was sent to a boarding school on the Hudson, Mike Dougherty went to a foundry to learn the core-making trade, Fred Snyder became an apprentice in a carpenter shop, Jimmy Flint went to work in a grocery, Sammy Lowenthal found a job in a clothing store in Fifth Street, Johnny Ryan, the amateur, went to work in a real photographic studio, Arty Klein worked in his father's cement store on Front Street, Tim Sturgis went to a business school, Larry Burns moved West, Jakie Schindelheimer became cashier in his father's pawnshop, Eddy Field became a gardener, Pete McDermid was killed by a street car, John Jackson started out in a newspaper office, Jerry Flanagan was a bell boy in a hotel, Dora Duggan was reception clerk in a doctor's office, Schmalz had the hydrophobia and was shot, Billy Carroll went to college, Elsie Fadden died in an epileptic fit, and the whole crowd dispersed.

Bridget did well at school, and the new atmosphere wrought a decided change upon her. She became an excellent musician and a fine student. While she was away her father retired and built a new home in the suburbs. There would call a foreigner who had no special business, but was

marriageable; he was of blue blood and Bridget was an heiress; there were young members of wealthy families and neighbors and friends her father had made under the new conditions. When Bridget came on a visit to her father and grandmother there would be compliments, singing, servants, bottles, feasts and crowds of guests. Bridget longed to see some of her old friends, but there was not a familiar face outside of the family. She looked in the city directory once for familiar names, but there were confusing double initials and several people of the same name, and none at the old addresses. She was particularly anxious about One, but it was immodest to advertise, and the directory had no trace of him. When she left school she soon became accustomed to the new home and to the pretty dresses, jewels, servants and equipages and her check books and the friendship of young ladies and men who were born and raised in opulence, and to the glib monologues of representatives of industries soliciting her to invest her fortune in enterprises ranging from supercapitalized chimerical oil wells to copper and cold concerns whose stocks were guaranteed to rise one hundred above par in a week after she would part with her money.

Once she donned a plain dress and went through the old neighborhood, passing through the alleys and side streets of her childhood, hoping to see a familiar person, but of no avail. Her manner and gait had changed in conformity with her new habits, she belonged there no more, she did not look natural there, and people and children pointed at her.

A young man, whose calling sometimes took him in the vicinity of the new Delaney home would glance toward it with a sigh, wondering how She was, if she was in town, whether she married, if she was happy—as happy as she was when they were brother Masons. He would stop and hope for a familiar figure to egress, whom he could greet and speak to, but it did not happen. In those moments his mind would wander back to when they played hide-and-seek, baby in the hat, tag, when they used to spin tops together. How guilty he felt when he recalled how he used to cheat her in a game of marbles. Then he wondered if she would speak to him if he *did* meet her. He remembered how, when he accidentally struck Mike McKenna on the shin with his shinny-stick, Bridget hastened to the pump, soaked her handkerchief and cleaned and dressed his contusion, and how Mikey continued crying until she kissed him! He could see her on one foot, hopping from square to square, kicking an oyster shell, playing hop-scotch, and how he used to cheat her in a game of pussy by monkey-turn measures. He could hear her say "No fair," and how argumentatively he would convince her that she was mistaken and that he was "on the square!"

He would have tried to enter, but his calling had given him many lessons in the evolution of human nature. Then he cogitated what a fool he was, standing there and hoping for a glimpse of one who never gave him a thought. Still, as if controlled by a magnet, every time he was within a half mile or so he managed to pass that

way. He would not presume. He would go through every stage of human emotion; he would imagine himself talking over old times with her, being introduced by her as an old friend; he would picture himself being snobbed. He would imagine her as the wife of someone who did not know her, did not understand her, could not appreciate her; if he had but a glimpse of her he could read it all. He would deliberate an excuse to call up her home under some pretense, giving a fictitious name, but his tender instinct would not let him decieve her even for an instant; it would be misdemeanor, sin, sacrilege! And the more of these little tricks his fertile brain would evolve and his finer senses reject the nearer she was to him, and he would quote mentally:

". . . But suffer me to pace
Round the forbidden place,
Lingering a minute,
Like outcast spirits who wait,
And see, through heaven's gate,
Angels within it. . . . "

III.

Bridget would think about a boy who must now be a man—somewhere. She remembered how he had whipped a larger boy for calling her some name; she could not help contemplating that youthful gallantry and friendship in comparison with the young men who now came to see her. Now it was all formality, sham, display, pomp, flattery.

One afternoon a messenger boy paddled his way through the bustle of horses, automobiles, footmen, carriages and guests, delivered a sealed envelope to a servant addressed to Bridget. The boy waited for answer. Bridget read:

". . . The writer is one of your playmates of years ago. I do not expect you would have time to see me, but won't you let me know how you are?"

It was written on brown Manila paper, and signed "John Jackson." She read the note over, her eyes became dipped and dim; he gave no address. "How shall I let him know anything?" she muttered; then she noticed the boy, and was informed that he waited for reply. There she sat and fidgeted; mindless of her surroundings, folding and unfolding the note; "Why did he not come himself?" she wondered. Then she wrote an answer. The boy turned on his heels and ran, with the right hand in his vest pocket, holding tight the gold coin which she gave him. The two hours of the boy's round trip seemed an eternity to John. Her note read:

"You are as welcome as a ripe apple. I shall be glad to see you any time. Be sure and come.

"Bridget."

He fastened his eyes on the missive, inverted it, eyed it sideways, as he saw the hand-writing experts do at court; but the writing was not familiar. It seemed too nice to be real. He meditated a moment, closed one eye, as if to detect some resemblance, placed one hand on his upper lip, coaxed his barbules, and eyed the lad

suspiciously, while the latter fumbled in his pocket. "Did you see the addressee herself?"

"You bet she was dressy."

"I mean," smiling, "did Miss Delaney write this herself?"

"I seen her do it."

"Describe her."

"Well, I don't know as I kin," still fumbling to guard the coin. "But I know she is an eighteen karater all right."

"I mean, how does she look?"

"O, she's a pippin."

"Look here, kid, I want to be sure you saw the right party. I wish you'd tell me all you saw about her. Now, do you understand me?"

"Say, don't I know a peach when I see't? She was the dressy all right; and there she was with the sparks. She's a gig walk, she is. My, but she is a tall tommy, 'most 's big 's you; her white glad rags was too long at one end and short at the upper. Say," still fumbling the eagle, "just send me to a dame like that every day, and soon I'll be president of the comp'ny; she's a dandy turkey," and as further evidence of good faith he produced his tip, "see what she gi'n me!"

John was at work when the boy returned. To go home for a change of clothes would have taken too long, so, with the inevitable brown pad in his coat and several lead pencils protruding from his breast pocket, he started for her home, but instead of the papers of the day, he took with him *her* note, and killed time during the ride by basking his eyes on it, and musing, "as welcome as a ripe apple."

His easy ways betrayed his profession. Those present paid little attention to him until Bridget came down, when the congeniality was conspicuous. There was the voice of real feminine ecstasy, a hearty hand shake, a kiss, and—"John!"—"Bridget!"

After formal introduction John observed a painting, the picture of a small boy, with mussed hair covering most of the forehead on one side, a mischievous grin, one tooth missing, one eye opened wide, looking awry, feet and legs bare to the end of the trousers above the knee, the trousers held up by two bands of suspender passing over one shoulder; at the other hip, where a button had been, fibres of thread hanging loosely, a large apple in one hand, and the other grasping two layers of suspender on one side of the chest. It was as nearly real as art could make it, an enlargement of one from a group of photographs of little Masons. He instantly recognized his once self. "Do I look much like the picture?" he asked.

"You look just like that—to me, John."

The young men in the drawing-room who did not understand the connection looked at the picture, looked at John, then laughed in chorus, loud and caustically; but the aspect was transformed enviably when Bridget excused herself, left her social duties in care of a friend, invited John through the place, showed him her conservatory, the sunken garden, her favorite horse, picked grapes and fresh tomatoes with him in the hot house, and took time to tell him of the way she spent her hours, entertaining and being en-

tertained, traveling, visiting. She showed him her painting outfit, her library, her china, and what not.

"Are you happy?" asked John.

She sighed. No answer.

"Who are the gentlemen?"

"Friends."

"What's on to-day?"

"A little reception. Nothing extra."

Then Bridget piled him with questions. He told her that he was a reporter, and had been all through the country gathering experience, had started as an office boy with one of the papers, "but," he said, "you left my question unanswered. I asked if you were happy."

"Well, I am somewhat out of my elements, John, are not you?"

"Not now. What are those young men?"

"Ed Wentworth's father is a traction man, Jim Quaile's father is United States Senator, Fred Cowper's father owns one of the department stores, Gerstling's father is a brewer, Willard's father is president of an insurance company, Doc Simpkins would be a physician, but his mother won't let him practice, says he don't have to, Gompers' father just died, he was a banker, Ben Robinson is in the automobile business, has been for years, but he has never been in his office but twice. Do you want to know all about the girls, too?"

"Is that a hint for me not to ask questions?"

"No, glad you are interested. The girls are of the different families, and their friends."

John was amused, and she could see traces of

it through what struggled to become his mustache. "What are you smiling about?"

"I just wondered how this crowd could live if their fathers were not."

"What do you care?"

"I am interested in the company you keep."

She laughed that warbling mirth and chuckle of melody. "Now," pointing to a bench, "we'll sit here while you'll tell me all about yourself, business and everything."

"I never talk business to ladies."

"Please do, John; I am a business woman, you know."

"But I just came to visit!" he protested.

"You must tell me." This with a deep, mellow gaze into his eyes.

"There is not much to my story. I am a cog in the great news-gathering system, and we cater that commodity to the people. In my line, one who gathers the best news and presents it the most readably is the most valuable man; I am just beginning to be a real useful reporter."

"What do you do when nothing happens?"

"For one, I can make things happen, but that is not often necessary. Something always turns up. When too much happens we do not print everything, and when less, we elaborate and go into details."

"Are *you* happy?"

"Fairly so, now."

"Tell me some of the adventurous incidents of your business."

"That would fill a library, and I would not know where to begin. You must not neglect your

friends, you had better go in; I'll tell you some of those things another time."

"Tell me, just a few of the troubles of the business."

"We get hardened to them, just like the boy to the thought of shedding blood when he is shooting birds. It is business, sport, bread and everything to us; no trouble at all."

"Leave '*us*' out; talk about yourself alone."

"I told you I was only a cog. In recent years a demand has been created for sensation, and in the brevity of time in which the facts have to be gathered, written, edited, proofread, printed, shipped and sold, there is not any too much time for exactness, and the people are hungry for sensatious matter, so one sometimes has to hit harder for the sake of sensation, cast aspersions, write up allegations, sometimes with sad results."

"How about the law?"

"There are quibbles in the law, and it is my business to know such technicalities as affect my calling; besides, prosecutors and judges will favor us some, because we can serve little good turns to them. Sometimes a reckless man *does* get into trouble."

"I never read of newspaper men being prosecuted."

"They are, but they do not appear in the press. None of us knows who will be next, you know. But the people crave for scandal. It is not entirely *our* fault."

"Are there no papers outside of that kind of business?"

"Yes, but my line is what they call yellow work."

"Don't you think you are in the wrong business?"

"I have the best paying job on our staff, and if I resigned, there would be a dozen applying for it tomorow; and what a chump I would be, out of work, for scruple."

"I think you are wicked."

"Thanks, Bridget. You did not ask what good I did, only the adventures of the buisness; even *you* were most interested in the sensatious end. You must now go in and see your friends. Maybe you can reform some of *them,* I am all right."

"If you make me go in, you must come with me."

"I should not venture to try to *make* you do things, but I must go; I shall have to work till midnight, perhaps longer."

"Will you come to-morrow?"

"Impossible."

"Next day?"

"Hardly, thank you, Bridget," starting away.

"Wait, stay for tea, please."

"I must go; but if you *will* see me, I'll try to drop in in a few days; I cannot state any definite time. If you'll be out it's all right, then I'll come again."

"I will not be out till you come. I must talk with you, about—your affairs."

"Now, no sermons. Good bye."

IV.

Did he not care to be with her? Did he dislike her, because she asked about things that were none of her business? To think that he would rather go to work than be with her! She was rude to him, did not accord him due respect, insulted him. She meant well, but it did not seem so to him. If he but knew her innermost thought of him! She would write and explain, but he left no address. Now she despised his occupation, then she did not; he was better than anyone in her crowd, and what a polish there was about him, that finish no dress suit could substitute! What a relief to have been with him. He said he'd come again.

Such were the revolutions of her mind. Few women can comprehend what work means to one in John's station, and how a few minutes' neglect or inattention to duties might subvert the current of his upward movement in life. What did she know!

John started about his business in routine maner, while his soul was in the suburbs. Parents and children whom Bridget used to know had begun to save their pennies and nickels in August for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners.

She knew that, as well as their numerous other vicissitudes; and, he reflected, wondering how she could ever outgrow those recollections.

He began to decide in favor of the likelihood, after all, that labor and capital, and the rich and

the poor, actually could not understand each other, because, not only many of them, born and raised outside of the atmosphere of the opposite classes, but even Bridget, who was born in the very heart of the slums, used to give her playthings to poorer children, and loved to help those around her, had so changed in the new surroundings as to waste her young life on the superfluities incidental to idleness and luxury. Would these people *know* her under the old conditions? It could not be. She said she was out of her elements.

Thus he cogitated, until one of the other cogs was reported ill, and another being on vacation, the city editor called on him to supply the deficiency by doing, in addition to his own, some of the duties of the absent men. The additional work was a great diversion to his disturbed mind —and rather fortunate that he did not stay for tea.

He called on Bridget whenever he could spare the time; they had ample occasion to talk matters over. Then she began to receive anonymous letters concerning John. At first she used to destroy them, but when they became more frequent she once said, "They are telling awful things about you."

"They must be very interested. Did they say I stole or murdered?"

"No, but that you have been in bad company."

"I have been with you all the time I could spare lately, and you are no bad company."

"But before——"

"You were not here, and I did the best I could,

and had the next best company—who told you those things?"

"I received word."

"No one would dare give *me* such word about *you,*" this rather sternly.

"But," she pleaded, understanding the hint, "anonymous letters——"

"Well, I refuse to be defendant unless my accuser stands face to face with me."

"No one tried to make you defendant—but it is so awful that they say things about you."

"Say what things?"

"Here," handing a note, "read for yourself."

"I do not read anonymous stuff, it is against the rules of this department; but," grinning, "I can stand things they say about me in that manner."

"Do you know, John," said she, changing the conversation, "I want to get out of this atmosphere, and go to live in a smaller house. Will you help me select one?"

"With pleasure," heaving a breath of relief.

"And then I shall take time to help other people."

"Good girl!"

"And I'll tell everybody that I am going to be busy now looking for another house, and would let them know when we'd move—I don't know where."

V.

The opportunity of helping her look for a house brought them together all the time John had be-

tween work and refreshments. In their excursions from suburb to suburb they would exchange reminiscences, talk about their old games, the boys, Dora Duggan's goat, the mortar and the concrete they used to make, the old shed in the alley; they would recall their early ambitions, talk about poor Schmalz. He would call her Brother Bridget, they would greet each other with the Masonic signs conceived by themselves years ago; and these expeditions would excite curiosity and comment among Bridget's friends, who were waiting for notice of the new address.

They have now spent a good many days together. Whether they found that house or not has not yet been announced. They are out of town now, on their wedding trip.

THE BLACK HAND.

(*From a Diary*)

In Central Park, New York, I inadvertently overheard the conversation of anarchists. Their language was that of educated men; their habiliments were common; and they hardly expected me to understand Italian. There were about seven in the group, and a few hundred feet south of this spot I had seen a larger number of their countrymen several minutes before.

I sat on a bench, reading. The seven sat on the ground; one hugged his knees in order to hold himself in a vertical position; one lay on his back; one on his side, and each as his idiosyncrasy inclined.

The conversation was not loud, but rather animated. Something was said that startled me. They saw my sudden movement and ceased talking. I was conscious of their embarrassment, and in order to relieve it, turned to them and said in their language, "Long live the Craft!"

"Camarado!" exclaimed a chubby man as he rose to grasp my left palm with his, and pressed my wrist in a certain manner with his thumb.

I was a member of some secret fraternities. All these fraternities have certain grips; and in

all of them the responsive grip is the same as the hailing one.

I pressed on his wrist in the corresponding place and answered, "Camarado."

There was intense interest displayed on their countenances. One who had faced the storms and the devils of the world in the manner and as long as I did, did not have to exercise any uncommon amount of tact to be equal to such an occasion. And I enjoyed the opportunity, too; for what would life be if it were not a school, to teach one something every day. I had nothing else to do. It was a great diversion. I had nothing more left in the world to lose; and I meant to make the best of the occasion.

The men looked at each other understandingly. I was calm. All left me, except one, my "comrade," who was, no doubt, to ascertain whether I was trustworthy.

"How long have you been a *fratello?*"

"Not long," I said, "only since there was nothing else left for me. How long have *you* been?"

He gave me a tale of hard luck. He had been cheated out of his earthly goods, he could not rise to his proper sphere since. Then he needed money; he appropriated funds not his own—and fell. Then the world had no pity on him. Religion was a farce. All paid taxes to churches, the churches had their priests; the priests preached the accepted doctrines of the creeds; and yet, outside of the church, there was no room in Civilization for the patrician who had once fallen. There had to be established a new order of things for the millions who had made mistakes in life, for

the world, as it was, was too small, and had no room for such a one. He did not so much object to great wealth as to certain existing conditions. Disabilities wrought upon men who had made mistakes would have to be removed. And temporary anarchy was the only salvation for the millions in his unfortunate position. Men in that fix usually turned to lives of crime, because people would not give them chances to make honest livings; and society was barred against them. And so forth.

I went to headquarters with him. The headquarters were not more than five hundred yards away from the police headquarters. It was a huge brick building with an Italian macaroni shop on the first floor, and the rest of the house occupied by some members of the craft.

We had taken a Broadway car downtown. After some straining attention to his rather rapid Italian, my mind became tired; and I asked if he could not speak in some language that was easier for me, for I had not practised my Italian in eighteen years. We talked French then; but he cautioned me not to talk too loud, for many Americans understood French.

At headquarters there were some thirty-five persons, all Italians. My "comrade" introduced me as Signore Biondo. It was the easiest name to remember, for I was many shades blonder than the lightest complexioned of them, and, indeed, I was the only blond.

All became interested in me. Anon a table was decked with nuts, raisins, figs, oranges, bananas, apples, pears, peanuts, plums and what not; and

it was time for lunch. These were the things of which the common meals consisted. In the center of the table was a plate for anyone who desired to contribute to the common fund. I contributed a dollar and took a cluster of grapes. I would not have anything else. Cardellicchio, my comrade, contributed a nickel, another man put in a few coppers. I was told that the provisions were contributed by some of the members, who conducted fruit stands and groceries, and that the pecuniary contributions went toward the rent.

I was immediately popular. I still wonder if the dollar was not the chief cause of it. Everyone related to me how he became an anarchist; and sometimes a half dozen talked at me simultaneously. I caught information in bits, as it was flung at me. In fact, I believe I received the best Italian lesson in my life on that day. I certainly did hear some talking. It was an interesting Sunday afternoon. Then I went my way, promising to come again at some meal hour, when I could meet the different members of the craft.

II.

I came on Tuesday evening at six o'clock. Everybody was cold and distant. I did not seem welcome. There were a number there who but two days ago laid their lives bare to me and now looked at me with enlarged eyeballs, amazement, horror, confusion, pallor and suspicious reticence. Some looked the pictures of sup-

pressed anger. I was apprehensive that they suspected me.

"What is the matter, signori, have you gone back on me?"

Never did I hear such vituperations in all my travels. There was not a vile name in the English and the Italian tongues that I was not called, all at the same time, and by as many lips.

"Where were you since you left this place?" asked Signore Cordino.

"Let's see. I believe I went to a Masonic Chapter last night."

"Ask him where he stops," commanded a dirty fellow.

"Are you not staying at the Hoffman House?" continued my interlocutor.

"Yes."

"See, he confesses!" "Ah, I told you." "He defies us." "It was good shadowing." "Son of a Dog." "Find out whom he is working for." "Where did he learn Italian!" "What does he do for a living?" "Trace him to his birth!" were some of their violent suggestions hurled at each other.

I was the coolest man in the mob. I begged them to sit down and let us talk it over; and in order to cause them to feel that I was not afraid, I was the first to sit down, and began to peel an orange.

"He uses a gold knife," exclaimed one.

"Sit down, fools!" I thundered.

All took seats except one. He was big, inclined to be red, and very tough. He asked me

to follow him to a room on the floor above for a private interview.

This was no time to lose my composure. I suspected what such a private interview might culminate in.

"No, comrade. You do not look quite straight to me. I feel much safer with the whole crowd here. What you have to tell me, you can tell in the presence of the craft; and what I know I will as lief tell to all. No private interviews."

"Sit down, Rosso," came a commanding voice; and the big tough sat down opposite me. Everybody else sat. Now I noticed two youths standing behind me, which made me feel uneasy, although I affected all the nonchalance I could.

"Cappuccia," I said, "you would not hurt a friend from behind, would you?"

"Why, no," said one of the cabbages.

("Cabbage" is the pet name of an Italian boy.)

"Then why don't you sit where you can study his face, and see whether he is true."

"Well spoken," said Sollivano; and the youths sat upon the empty fruit boxes, where I could see them.

I was the target of so many questions that it was plain that my answers to them would not restore their confidence. I was asked a score of things at the same time. The questions ranged from what my business was to where I got my scarf pin, who was my tailor and where I learned French; how long I had lived in New York, and where I was known by anarchists.

The last question was my poser.

"Ask not another question. I will tell you my

story in my own way." This elicited their attention, and I continued:

"Some six years ago I was engaged to a Miss Mary D. in Pittsburg. Her father, Mr. D., was a real estate agent——"

"What does D. stand for?" asked the tough.

"Diavolo," for all it concerns you.

"Serves you right, Rosso, for interrupting. Continue, Signore Biondo. Call him Diavolo. It is your personal affair. You need not mention any real names," said Cardellicchio, taking notes with his pencil.

Everyone began to look sympathetic. It started out like a love story, and no man is too low to be interested in a real one. I continued:

"I had a little strong box containing valuables. I asked Mr. Diavolo to let me keep that box in his vault. He consented. He was such a church man, you know! You see, I was engaged to his only child; I trusted him, and took no receipt——"

"Of course not," interrupted Cardellicchio.

"Shut up!" said Rosso, who claimed a grudge; "stop interrupting."

"No more interruptions, men," commanded old Sollivano. "Continue, Biondo."

I resumed:

"Anon Mr. Diavolo told me that the house, which was in his wife's name, was mortgaged, and that payment was past due. He asked if I could not lend him enough to clear it. I had just about enough for it, and I gave him the money.

"I told you he was a real estate man. As such he had charge of the collection of the rents of

different sorts of houses. I say many houses inhabited by as many different classes of people, of as many different characters. Some of those houses had people of only one sort of character——"

"You mean women," interrupted Grosso, an adipose, good-natured butcher. "Go on, it is plain."

"One day Mr. Diavolo invited me to go with him to one of those houses for 'a hot time,' as he termed it. I would not go."

"Of course not," leered the butcher, dubiously. "You are too good. There are just two perfect men on earth, you and the Pope." The butcher resumed sucking the mouthpiece of his pipestem, and I went on:

"To go into details would take weeks. I must be brief to tell you the whole story in one session: Things happened that rendered me suspicious of the old man's honesty; and I went to see if the mortgage was paid off. It was not. Then I went to him on several occasions and asked him to let me have my box of valuables. He was dilatory. His procrastinations annoyed me; and when I was persistent he finally said that I would have to prove that I gave it to him; and when I told him that members of his own family knew it, he said that if I sued him he would say that he did not know what the box had contained; that his vault had been robbed, and that my things were lost with his valuables.

"He had the criminal law down all right, as you see.

"Then I went to his wife, and I told Mrs.

Diavolo my troubles. She wept bitterly. She was very sorry. She told me that at the time he married her Mr. Diavolo was engaged to another young lady, and that after the wedding the disappointed fiancée sent a letter to the bride, written to her by the young groom, saying that he was sorry to break off the engagement, much as he was attached to her, but this lady having some funds was a great help to him, and hence the alliance. And the unhappy wife is still in possession of the letter, written to the other girl, twenty odd years ago. I read it. Poor Mrs. Diavolo told me facts enough about him to satisfy me that he was a diavolo, indeed——"

"And he was a church man," interjected the butcher.

"Yes, such a one as would give twenty-five dollars to a public charity when his wife wanted necessities. You see, that advertised him. Then Mrs. Diavolo, her daughter and I agreed that Miss Mary and I get married without paying any attention to him, that I leave the city, go West, and my little wife would follow me on receipt of telegram from me, calling her.

"My bride remained in Pittsburg. I did not have much money, but left all that with her, except about fifty dollars. She accompanied me to the depot. Before we parted she asked me to leave with her my watch, chain and stud, saying that I might lose them among strangers. It was childish of her, for I have been among strangers since my ninth year, but I complied."

"Husband, wife and daughter were in con-

spiracy to fleece you," observed an old sailor of hardened features.

"Well, I went West. I wrote and telegraphed for her. No answer. Then some of my letters began to come back, readdressed by my wife. I knew the writing well from the letters she used to write me."

"Have you any of the love letters?" asked Sollivano.

"You see, I left my trunks with her, to send or bring them to me; *they* contained her letters; and she took them back. I have some few bits of her writing. I know her writing all right.

"Well, I was in Chicago a few weeks. I wrote my wife a letter every day. Some of them were registered. I had not much money. She had my address from some of the letters which she had opened. Then the postoffice notified me that money orders made out to me and mailed to me in Pittsburg were accepted by her, and the letters opened and destroyed and the money orders cashed, and the money kept, by her.

"But I must be brief, for my story is long. A constable arrested me on a charge brought against me by a Pittsburg woman, one of the friends of Mr. Diavolo, who followed me for that purpose. She admitted that Mr. Diavolo gave her my address, paid her expenses and her lawyer. She had in possession the only photograph I had given my bride! She charged me with——"

"A child on the stage?" grunted the butcher.

"Something like that."

"That was a device by the old scamp to turn

your wife against you," opined the sailor, who was a preacher in the old country before his misfortunes came. "She was not quite mean enough to suit his purposes without some such job."

"Well," I continued, "I had a mock trial. It cost me five hundred and fifty dollars and attorney's fees; and a nasty record to stand against my name for life. Entire strangers signed my bond.

"Then I was mad, and wrote some angry letters to Mr. Diavolo, his wife and his daughter. Had I written the same things on postals, it would have been punishable under the law. So, what does he do, Diavolo forges my writing on postal cards, sends them to himself and gets me indicted and prosecuted, to make me another record.

"In the meantime I obtained a divorce from his daughter. I had witnesses to prove worse things, but I begged the judge to grant it on the ground of desertion only. A divorce—one more record.

"To vindicate his daughter, Mr. Diavolo also obtained a divorce, by fraud and default, having charged that I was a married man at the time I married his daughter, and in order to keep me in hot water, prosecuting me for the alleged insults that reached him on the postal cards, at the same time.—A sort of a taint of bigamy—an additional record——"

"He first robbed you, then fooled you out of the jurisdiction, next broke your heart, then besmirched your character; and then kept you on

the defensive in order to hold you down during the limitation of the law; so that if ever you do get up and try to get back at him you'd be too late," judged the sailor. "He had lawyers to engineer that job all right."

"I had another mock trial," I continued. "Mr. Diavolo swore the postals were in my writing, and I was found guilty. But Mr. Diavolo had written many libels about me to people who had known me, and who turned those letters over to me. I gave those letters to the judge and showed him that those letters and the postals were in the same writing. Then the judge said that he did not believe I wrote the postals; and the fine was not imposed.

"Now, remember, it took more than three years for all that I now briefly told you to happen."

"And how did you live all that time?" asked old Sollivano.

"I worked. I found employment in banks, in railroad offices, I did translating. I reported in the courts. I wrote some for the Press. Then I became a lawyer——"

"Stop him, stop him!" cried the butcher, roaring with laughter. "Do not let him go any higher. Lawyer is far enough."

"Signori, you doubt my narrative, and I shall not continue."

"I believe you so sincerely," said one of the cappuccia, who a little while ago was on the committee to shed my blood from behind, "that I swear every word is Gospel truth."

"That is another extreme," grunted Grosso,

smoking furiously; "but it is interesting. I shall not interrupt you again. Go on."

"Go on," begged everybody.

III.

"Well, I was shadowed all the time, just like you gentlemen shadowed me since our first acquaintance. All my new friends and clients and business connections would receive anonymous letters, saying that I had ruined a young woman in Pittsburg, that I had married as a bigamist, that I had been convicted for sending obscene literature through the mail, that I deserted a young wife a few hours after I married her; and it referred to the records of the litigations I had had. It interfered with my business; and new acquaintances, who knew no better, preferred to shun me. Then fellow attorneys would talk about these things. You know there is always a hungry lawyer who thinks that every client he turns away from you will go to *him.* Then there is another class, the kind that for a remuneration would circulate the scandal in the fraternities, in the clubs, in the churches, in the hotel lobbies and in the saloons—that would call up your new acquaintances, and even your landlady, and the various members of her family, and your fellow boarders—to spread the defamation; and then there is the innocent gossip, who circulates it free of charge, glad to have something to talk about; and as everyone adds his own version to the tale, it usually becomes more and more horrible in transit. And it was hard. Acquaintances

would ask for explanations. Everyone thought he was entitled to a separate explanation all for himself, and Chicago was a big city. I would make many friends, only to lose them soon, when these stories would follow. Good many would not even ask for explanations, for it was less trouble to judge; they would simply cut me, and would caution others against me, repeating what they heard. Many of these hooting ladies and gentlemen were such as would throw themselves into one's way, and pass stinging remarks as they would go by one in the streets; just to have occasion to say at home that they had affronted one; for there are influences in which such conduct qualifies one for society, and there are people—yea, such as wear silks and broadcloths and diamonds—who never cease bragging of their own insolences."

"Why did not you go back to Pittsburg and kill Diavolo?" asked a cabbage.

"That would have made another record in my life; and I already had enough to try to live down. And I certainly did not wish to be hanged for him. But the worst is yet to come."

"Mary, mother of God, have mercy upon him!" prayed Sollivano, making the sign of the cross.

"I became connected with a newspaper called the Chicago-American. The nature of my position was this: People from all over would write to the Counselor for legal advice. I was the Counselor; and I would answer the inquiries. It was a much envied position; it was conspicuous, and some lawyers, if they do envy anything, it is

prominence. I began to make some clients; and soon after a client would come, he would have copies of those records sent to him. They sent them to my friends, the editors and the owners of the paper.

"Aside from all this, I had made enemies in Chicago. A large city has a great deal of corruption. Many of these corrupt institutions had come to my observation, and I used to expose them in my articles. I told you I wrote some——. For instance, there was a system of justices of the peace; and the justices had their constables. They worked for fees and commissions. They would blackmail, extort, miscarry justice and rob in a manner that it would take too much time and parley to tell you now. I had a hand in breaking up the system, and in establishing municipal courts instead, whose judges are on salaries. These justices made a desperate fight for existence. What I knew about them I wrote. My charges against them were never denied. Every lawyer knew them to be true. I wrote about other corrupt men and organizations. So you see, I had enemies.

"One of these justices was also a lawyer. He had been a wife-beater for many years. He lived in my neighborhood. His wife found some love letters in his clothes. She had other grievances, which she suppressed, until the letters from the other woman came to her hands. She followed up the letters and traced the writer; and soon found other bits of evidence."

"I understand," grunted the butcher, drowsily.

"Well, I brought suit for her, as her lawyer. I

had the justice evicted from his wife's house, and got him to pay alimony for the support of herself and her minor son. Her husband, together with Mr. Diavolo, and my other enemies, combined their forces to crush me. The first thing they did was to go to my neighbors and tell them that I confided with them most terrible scandals about their wives. This occasioned my making of enemies where I expected friends, for they were people I befriended continuously, like a good neighbor naturally would. Those that did not become enemies, at least became neutral and distant, whilst I counted on their friendships. To render these calumnies credible, my enemies produced certified copies of the records of the persecution I had sustained, which went to show how wicked I was. Then my enemies would send mutual acquaintances to me, whom I later found to be in with them, to tell me that those same neighbors had said unkindly things about *me*. By now I was a busy man. The only time I was contented was when busy; for then I was diverted from my unhappy state. I would write letters berating such people as would thus be reported to talk unkindly about me; whilst at the same time, they were led to believe that *I* talked about *them*.

"I experienced some pangs of ingratitude, too.

"Then this justice of the peace put in a defense to his wife's suit to the effect that he was very innocent, that the only reason why she sought the divorce was that she was in love with *me*, her lawyer, whom she wanted to marry; that her said lawyer was a very bad man; and he set forth in

the pleadings the humiliating misfortunes I had been through, to make it appear to the court that I was just the sort of a man that would be apt to try to break up a happy home. And the papers, which would always make the best of anything that was suggestive of scandal, would take hold of the thing and exploit it to the utmost; and for more than two years I saw my name and my picture in the press almost every day, with nothing modest said about me; and the many justice shop lawyers and the other justices and constables would busy themselves to annoy me day and night, and sue me and get judgments by fraud and default, which I would have to pay, and to prosecute me on various pretenses, just to keep me busy and upon the defensive, while other underhanded work was engineered behind my back, and they would give unfounded and terrible tales about me to the papers, in order to lampoon me and to vituperate me, probably in order to drive me out of the case."

"And did they?" asked old Sollivano.

"Once they asphyxiated me with gas. They broke into my office twice at night, attempting to steal my papers. They poured vitriol on a client of mine as she left my office; but I would have stood by her at all hazards."

"Good for you!" said one of the cappuccia.

"It must have been hard to endure it all," sighed Cardellicchio.

"I am brief. When I get through, you will not yet have heard the thousandth part; and the worst is yet to come."

"Father, Son, Holy Ghost, God, save him!" said

Rosso, the tough, making the sign of the cross, a half dozen comrades pattering and crossing after him, and the rest staring with mouths wide open, except the butcher, who lay on the filthy floor, snoring.

"I'd rather not finish the story," I pleaded. "I hate to talk trouble."

But they all seemed interested. They insisted. I was apprehensive for my safety; I wanted their confidence; until I would find opportunity to break away for good. I well saw my fate if they once became convinced that I was a spy. It was my hoax when I started out. I couldn't spare my life just now; I had too many duties to attend to in the world. They urged me, and I resumed:

"Well, sirs, my enemies persuaded the state's attorney to let them file proceedings against me, in his name, asking the supreme court to take away my license, so that I could not practice law. But there had to be some sort of a trial; so they recommended a rebellious little German to be master in chancery; and they appointed a class of lawyers to prosecute me that would actually have been a disgrace even to the justice shops which I helped drive out of existence, by the new law, which was soon to be of force, leaving them, as lawyers, out of their elements. They had neither decent shoes nor clothes nor clean linen. They were poor and mean. My enemies selected this class in order to render my humiliation as keen as possible. I was marked for slaughter. The trial consisted of many sessions. I had evidence galore to show that the judgments obtained

against me in the past were secured by fraud, that the proceedings were fraudulent, and that the whole nasty work was wrought by very filthy enemies——"

"Skunks," interrupted Sollivano, with a sigh. "You fell in with skunks. Win or lose, you had to be marked by the brunt of the skunks. And not one skunk, but many skunks. Do you know how skunks fight? Let me tell you——"

"Never mind telling us how skunks fight," said di Castro. "This is supper time. Continue, Biondo." I resumed:

"Well, there would be disorders and fights. My witnesses would be insulted. The sessions would break up in disorder. Then motions would be made to the supreme court, asking it to fine and imprison me for contempt, charging that *I* raised the rows. After every session I had to defend against such suits. My prosecutors would bring the charges, and the master in chancery would certify that the charges were correct. Then this master in chancery would give false stories to the press, representing them to be true reports of the proceedings before him. When I was not busy at the supreme court in Springfield, I had my hands full at the master's office; when not there, then the R. case kept me busy."

"What was the R. case?" asked a cabbage.

"That was the case of Mrs. R. against the justice of the peace."

"Why don't you give us real names?" protested the other cappucci. "Who was Mr. R.?"

"Call him Rognozo," suggested Cordino; "but do not let them interrupt you for want of names."

"And," I proceeded, "the Rognozo case was finally tried by another judge; the first judge, who had ordered Mr. Rognozo to support his family and to get out of the house, died. Now the divorce case was up before Judge M——"

"Call him Macchinatore," said one.

"Judge Macchinatore was an enemy of mine, a friend of my enemies, and a politician, who would always cater to the numbers. My enemies were the numbers; I was only one; and he hoped to be re-elected——. But that is another story——"

"Why was he your enemy?" asked Cardellicchio.

"He claimed I wronged him on two occasions. He was an Israelite, who has not lived up to his own faith nor to any other. I had occasion to write him a business letter a few days before the Jewish New Year. I made a postscript to my letter. The postscript was in Hebrew, wishing him a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

"He claimed that my Hebrew writing was sardonic, and that I intended it as an insult. I did not think I needed to apologize; and when he accused me of the insidious insincerity I took back my good wish and told him to go to the devil."

"Well done," said the tough. "That was one occasion. What was the other occasion?"

"I tried a case. During the proceeding of the trial I made the remark that you can always tell

a bird of prey from its hooked beak. He grabbed for his nose; and everyone laughed."

"Well said," added Rosso, the tough, bringing forth volleys of laughter.

"But," I continued, "it was not fun for me to try a case before him, which could have been disposed of in a reasonable time, and which he wilfully and venomously held in court for months; in order to be in the limelight, in order to have his picture in the papers in connection with the case, from time to time, and in order to give his wife, his friends and his relations chances to sit upon the bench at the right and left of him. No court ever looked more like a pawn shop or a frippery store than when he had his friends there, to whom he thus made exhibitions of his exercise of power; and who appreciated the dignity of sitting with the judge. Once, in order to give the papers occasion to print a sensation in extra large red type, he declared that I was insane, for no sane lawyer would have persisted in standing by a woman, as I did by Mrs. Rognozo, who did not have much money, and had a husband who was so influential in the lower regions of Chicago! Only a lawyer can understand just how hard such a judge can make it for a young practitioner!"

"Do I not know?" said Cordino. "Was not I a judiciary in Sicili?"

"And was not I an advocate in Naples?" added another. "Do you think the fraternity consists of blockheads? Like you, we all have a story."

"Well," I resumed, "when I was not busy before this man I was busy at the master in chan-

cery's, or at the supreme court; to say nothing of my other business. But I must be brief, and come down to the point.

"The reason why, it was urged, I should not be allowed to practice law, was that I had such a bad record; what other reasons they submitted was inserted for the sake of volume only. To make things the worse, they enlisted Judge Macchinatore to do some lobbying at the supreme court, and to prolong the Rognozo case. The supreme court would impose large fines on me, as a result of the complaints certified by the master, and would order me to go back to the master in chancery to defend. Clients who would read of my bad reputation, which was thus manufactured, would become suspicious and run to my office in mobs. They would want their papers back; they would want their retainers back. People heretofore respectful would now be insolent. They would preface their demands by saying that they were told by the secretary of the bar association to go back to them if I did not comply. I was proud. I did not *have* to comply, but I would not represent any client whose confidence I did not possess. I would give them checks, returning fees, even for work I had already done, just to get rid of them. My fate was prearranged. The scheme was to make my fall as great as possible. In order to accomplish the trick they had to lift me to a high eminence. They got the newspapers to announce the startling discovery that I was a member of one of the royal families of Europe. The result was, that when I tried the Rognozo case, before Judge

Macchinatore, the court room and the halls were so packed with spectators, that policemen and deputy sheriffs were assigned to make way for the lawyers to enter. We had night sessions, too, in order to give such of the judge's friends as had to be in their stores all day, chances to sit on the bench with him.

"Every time I would go to the master in chancery's office there would organize the same row. I paid fellow lawyers to be with me, more as witnesses than as lawyers. They accepted my large fees and would not be on hand when I came to the master's for trial. It has now become perfectly legitimate to rob me. After I had sold my books, in order to buy necessaries, and was virtually moneyless, the supreme court ordered me to pay a large fee to the master in chancery. I did not have it, and so pleaded. The master reported that I refused to pay him and that I refused to present my evidence. The fact is he had a typewritten transcript of what evidence I presented; and what I could not present was due to his rows. I did not engage him in the first place; so why should I have paid him? But that is neither here nor there. In vain did I defend. The court decided against me, by default."

IV.

"It was a court of myrmidons," observed one of the cappuccia, after some meditation.

"That is what breeds anarchy," sighed Sollivano.

"Chicago is the worst place in the world," added di Castro

"It was a long story, but I stated it briefly to you. All the big cities have their bad influences; and I just fell into the mire. I started wrong."

"You married wrong," said a tall, lanky man. "But what are you doing *here?*"

"I was a physical wreck when I left Chicago. I passed bar examinations in other states; but my enemies would follow me. They would hire some hungry lawyer to show around that nasty record which the supreme court was fraudulently induced to make for me by default. This record was a sort of a compilation of all the records of which I told you, together with the report of the master in chancery, concluding, in substance, that all these facts prove me to be of such bad character as not to be allowed to practice law. New acquaintances, who would tolerate, and more or less respect me, would turn with horror. Then people I knew, liked, served and befriended would turn their faces in the streets, to avoid seeing me. Wherever I would go, I would get a pleasant start, and then just such a finish! Then I would leave, unkindly vilified, only to encounter the like experiences elsewhere."

"Is he still talking," mumbled Grosso, whom the flies had gradually awakened, as their numbers increased. "Can't you gag him?"

Four men lifted the good natured butcher by his extremeties and carried him into the kitchen behind, in the hope that there he would regain his sleep; and I proceeded:

"I just came from Nashville. I am writing a

book, which may be printed, some day. It tells the story in greater detail than you heard it. I already have about a thousand pages, handwriting. I am collecting evidence to prove everything I say in the book. I am on my way to Washington to copy some facts from periodicals filed in the Congressional Library. I was brief. This is the story of seven years. End."

"Thank Heaven! End!" said a coarse voice from the kitchen. It was the butcher's.

"Shut up," cried an angry carbonaro. "You old pot of grease, if you don't hush we'll drop you out of the window."

General silence prevailed for a while. Nobody touched a bite during the whole interview. I said I was hungry, deposited a dollar on the plate, and took a fig.

"Take back that dollar," said old Sollivano. "Give us a dime, or less."

I tried to plead that it was a pleasure to make the contribution.

"No parley, my word is law here. A dime!"

I gave a dime. We all drew to the table. Then I ate about ten oranges, a handful of figs, two bananas, a pear, some grapes, a few walnuts—and then I was still hungry, but was bashful to eat more.

Even Grosso, the butcher, who took his seat between the two cappuccia, was in deep meditation; and not a word was uttered during the repast.

The crowd dispersed into the different sections of the building, some to play at their favorite games of chance, others to lounge, to drink, or to discuss *me*, as they pleased. Five of the elders

remained with me. I was about to take my leave; the fact is, I was anxious to get to the hotel for a warm meal. I have never been so hungry before.

V.

"Signore Biondo," addressed me one. "You told us a specious story. Some of the craft believe you; and some think you are a spy. We do not think either way.

"But I inform you that we are an endless chain of men scattered in the world, whom neither imprisonment nor gallows can cow. If you are a spy, Jesus have mercy upon you. Neither your life nor our lives matter that (he snapped his fingers) to us."

"Yes, sir."

"Have you a clipping from a newspaper, showing your name in connection with what you said?"

"Thousands of them. At the hotel. I shall drive there at once and bring you a gripful, within an hour, if you desire."

"Don't you stop with any carriage in front of *this* house!"

"One clipping is enough," said another. "We chose just one of the many bits of proof you claim to possess. I want a clipping."

"But my name is not Biondo, you know."

"Everyone knows that. We all have stage names."

"Noms de plumes," laughed another. "We gave *you* a nom de plume, too."

I came next day with a clipping from the Chicago Tribune. I also brought a number of documents and produced them. The newspaper article covered a whole page, and contained my likeness, with my name under it. Mr. and Mrs. R.'s likenesses with their names under it, and the picture of the judge, whom we called Macchinatore, with *his* real name. The carbonari were satisfied.

"Now we have the real name of everyone concerned," said Signore Cordino, pulling his greezy mustache. "Even of Mr. Diavolo. All we have to do is go to work."

"There is no work for *you* to do," I said, pensively.

"Yes there is. Diavolo *must* die."

"Nonsense," I said. "Not till his time comes."

"His time *has* come! Cesare will see to it. He can choose a sling shot or a cannon or a pill, as he sees fit. Or he can find a job in a lunch room where Diavolo eats, or wherever he drinks. Leave it to him."

"Who the devil is Cesare?"

"Your friend. You do not have to know him. It has come to his lot——"

"You are crazy. He will not hurt Mr. D."

"Him or you," thundered Cordino.

"Well, me, then! It was a joke. I am no cutthroat. I am no carbonaro. I am no anarchist. I put my nose in the hole—and the tale had to follow."

"Like a fox, eh! You are a *spione*, then?"

"No spy, either. I just had nothing else to do. It was a deception for amusement, a hoax."

"How about the evidence—all these papers, and the newspaper article, with the pictures."

Another poser. This took my breath away. The gazes of the five pairs of dark and mysterious eyes burned mine. I sat down, exhausted.

"You or Diavolo, will be dead within a few days," repeated Cordino.

"Not unless you are cowards enough to take advantage of me in this damned butcher shop. Not if I am ever in a street again."

"You saw no crime committed here. We are not afraid of you. You cannot prove anything against us, under the American law. And would you betray this crowd?"

"No."

"Under any conditions?"

"No."

"Diavolo will be dead on or before next Friday. We are your friends. The ballot was picked. His fate is sealed. That is the law. You may go."

I would not go. *"I will simply have to get out of this," I meditated. I was unhappy and lonesome. I wanted someone to talk to. I had not spoken Italian in a long time. It was interesting adventure. I meant no harm; but I did not mean to join this craft. If Mr. D. is hurt, these fellows will own me forever, for they will know that I had a hand in a murder. I have an idea:*

"Signori," I pleaded. "If he *has* to die, won't you assign me to the job? You ought to. I am the one that has the grievance."

"Bravo, bravuro!" exclaimed one of them; and after a short debate, the duty was assigned to me.

VI.

I went to Pittsburg, for I had some business to attend to there. Whether I was shadowed or not, I could not tell, for I saw many Italians everywhere. They are quite numerous and well scattered; and generally speaking, like all classes of foreigners, they look more or less alike, unless you know them individually. Of course, I had no more murder at heart than I have now. What bothered me was the question of my own escape; to say nothing of my more serious troubles.

I got back on Sunday morning. Cordino met me at the Pennsylvania depot. He was very anxious about how I made out. He was about sixty years old; and I felt I could talk with him in a manner the younger men would not understand.

"I am sick of this," I said.

"O, get it off your mind, boy. We all have dipped our hands in the same fluid. One bad man less in the world. You admit he deserved death, and he got it——"

"Stop!" I ordered, in disgust. Then both of us were silent until we got out of the ferryboat.

"Come, all you want is a good sleep. Come to headquarters with me. Everyone is anxious about you, and how you worked it."

"What the devil are you talking about. You don't think I killed Diavolo, do you?"

"What—what then?"

"I want to get away. I want to start over again, somewhere."

"And if your enemies pursue you, and you fail?"

"I will hold out as long as I can. And if I fail, I'll go elsewhere, and start again."

"How long do you think a man can endure that?"

"To the end of the world."

"Then what's the use of our craft?"

"No use at all."

We entered a dingy stairway leading up to an Italian restaurant. There we met old Sollivano, who was apparently waiting for us. I never took the organization quite so seriously until now, when one met me at the station, and another awaited us both. I felt that someone must have posted them of my arrival, unless, indeed, they watched every train for me.

Cordino ordered a bottle of claret. Sollivano asked for macaroni and cheese. I asked for an orange.

My two companions had a whispered conversation, in my presence. Then Sollivano asked:

"How is the devil?"

"Diavolo is about the same," I understand.

"The stray shot—and did it not kill? eh? what? Talk——. How is he?" All this at the usual low breath.

"I think he will recover this time again."

"Again!"

"Look here, Signori," I pleaded. "You are older and wiser men than the rest. You ought to help me get out of this, for good."

Not another word was uttered and again silence reigned, until we reached headquarters.

"Well, Signore Biondo," asked Cardellicchio, "did you get him?"

"A higher law prevented me."

"Did he die before you came?"

"He had run right into a stray bullet," volunteered old Sollivano, laughing and wringing his hands with some sort of joy.

"No such thing," I contradicted. "He is under surgical care."

"That's all right. I hope the doctor will finish the job," sighed the tough.

"I don't. I hope he will survive. He has a sick wife to live for. This is his seventh operation—cancer—in the nose——"

"And how is the wife?" inquired a dirty one.

"Old, sick, bald, a living skeleton. Poor—no servant; *she* has to do the scrubbing and the cooking and the washing for the house. They never had very much, but they lost that. God bless them!"

"Bless them!" shouted Cardellicchio, "no wonder Judge Macchinatore said you were crazy. And how is Signorina Maria?"

"Mary—she is going out, working, every day, to help support the family," I sighed. "There is a higher law."

Then the craft sang *"Libero Carbonari"*; and while they sang, Sollivano and Cordino took me by the arms and led me out, never again to enter the den of the Black Hand.

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